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# Carl A. Preyer

THE STORY OF A KANSAS MUSICIAN

Howard F. Gloyne, M.D.



CARL A. PREYER



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CARL A. PREYER

The Life of a Kansas Musician

by

HOWARD F. GLOYNE, M. D.

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*When the sun goes below the horizon, he is not set; the heavens glow for a full hour after his departure. And when a great and good man sets, the sky of this world is luminous long after he is out of sight. Such a man cannot die out of this world. When he goes he leaves behind much of himself. Being dead he speaks.*

—HENRY WARD BEECHER





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## Prelude

A record of Carl A. Preyer's experiences, activities, and career may properly be offered on the second anniversary of his death as a contribution to the history of music in America and particularly in the State of Kansas and its University since it is so closely identified with the two latter.

In the following pages I have tried to create a memorial to Professor Preyer by giving a brief biographical sketch of him, by presenting a few of his more characteristic statements about piano technique, by pointing out some of his ideas on harmony and composition as exemplified in his more important works, and by giving a complete list of his published and unpublished compositions.

Some of the material has been gathered from lesson notes and frequent chats with him during my period of study and friendship comprising the last seven years of his life. Other sources, including those upon which the historical facts of Kansas University and its Fine Arts School are based, are listed in the bibliography. Exhaustive care in the verification of the facts herein presented has been attempted.

I am indebted to many admirers of Professor Preyer who responded to my form letter about his career. It will be impossible to enumerate all their names here; I hope the knowledge that they contributed in some way to the permanent record of one of the eminent men of music in America will be enough compensation. Throughout this work the names of a few friends and students are mentioned. Since all could not be included, it seemed wisest to give only those names necessary for the continuity of the story as I have chosen to present it.

Indebtedness is especially acknowledged:

To Mrs. Carl A. Preyer and her daughter, Miss Emily Preyer, for many hours spent in discussions with me, for helping in preparing the list of compositions, for proof-reading the first chapter, and for placing at my disposal many early newspaper articles and other memorabilia without which this work would have been impossible.

To other members of the Preyer family, including Mrs. Helen Preyer Mayer, Delanco, New Jersey, sister of the composer, for contributing valuable facts and anecdotes about his early life.

To Dean John H. Nelson of the Graduate School for editing the manuscript and for contributing materially to the readability of these pages.

To Miss Lucy Parrott, for the use of early musical programs and names of early Preyer alumni, for proof-reading the entire manuscript, for

critically examining the material on Preyer's technical and harmonic ideas, and for various other splendid suggestions.

To my fellow members of the Preyer Memorial Committee, for their wise counsel, guidance, and support of this book.

To the late Miss Louise Wiedemann, for proof-reading the first chapter, for supplying data concerning Preyer's early life in the University, and for much encouragement. (Her death on July 22, 1949, left a vacancy in the Preyer Memorial Committee which cannot be filled. It is tragic that she did not live to see this work in final form, a fulfilled project she greatly desired.)

To Dean D. M. Swarthout and several present members of the Kansas University Fine Arts faculty, for encouragement, advice, and various impressions of their colleague.

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To Mr. Richard A. Anderson, 1948 graduate from the Department of Design, for putting into final form my conception of the cover design.

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To Dr. Robert Taft, author of *Across the Years on Mount Oread*; the University of Kansas Press, and the University of Kansas *Graduate Magazine*, for the kind loan of photographic plates.

To the musical journals and newspapers listed in the bibliography, for quotations from various articles as noted in the text.

To Theodore Presser Company, Philadelphia, for allowing quotation of material from *The Etude* and from the preface of Preyer's *Studies for the Development of Rhythm and Expression*.

HOWARD F. GLOYNE, M.D.  
Kansas City, Kansas  
November 10, 1949

# The Man

*What manner of man is this?—Mark IV:41.*

*He was a man, take him for all in all,*

*I shall not look upon his like again.—Hamlet, Act I, Sc. 2.*

In the year 1863 two events in the history of the University of Kansas were taking place—one in the two-year-old state of Kansas, the other many thousands of miles away in the little town of Pforzheim on the margin of the Black Forest in the Land of Baden, Germany. The recent admission of the state of Kansas to the Union and the contest between the towns of Lawrence and Emporia in their bids to secure the site for a state university contrasted with the quietness of the thriving Badenese town where Jean Heinrich Konrad Preyer from Amsterdam and his young wife Marie Carolina Heinz of Pforzheim were eagerly awaiting a child.

Jean Preyer and his younger brother Christian had inherited a large sum of money which was held in trust for them until they reached the age of twenty-one. When Jean received his inheritance, he traveled from Amsterdam, Holland, to Pforzheim, then the "Gold City" of Germany, where he invested his money in the jewelry business. He soon owned a factory employing some twenty-five persons and had a large and beautiful residence on the same grounds as his business. As evidence of his hospitality and in conformity with the custom in factories where the employees had to walk one to four miles to and from work, he served his employees cheese and beer or other refreshments twice daily, providing a good time for all of them. This quality of helping make life enjoyable, of being an excellent host, was to be inherited by his son, Carl Adolph Preyer, who was born on July 28, 1863.

The young boy had a happy early life along with his sisters, Helen and Emilie, and his brothers, Friedrich and Jean. The latter three, however, died at an early age. Carl's musical talent was fortunately recognized while he was yet a child and his musical education was begun under Professor Schmidt of his native city. But his young life was not happy for long.

A Professor Houser, brother of the Preyer family's minister, asked Carl's father to let him board at his house while Carl attended a school. Jean consented and sent the boy to Professor Houser, who lived in Alsace Lorraine. He was forced to go into the Vosges Mountains to collect rare herbs for his guardian. Failure to secure the correct herbs or enough of them brought severe punishment and insufficient food. Carl's

mother sent him many packages containing food and other delights, but the boy never received them; any package or gift was kept by the Professor. His father could not believe the boy's story about mistreatment until he heard it from other sources and realized its truth from the physical condition of the lad. The first mark of cruel mistreatment by life—a mark seemingly useful as part of his general education—left its imprint on the young musician.

Carl's mother, a very beautiful, gentle, kind woman, was ambitious for her child and eager to have him realize a musical career. Through her efforts a sum of money was secured from the Duke of Baden to help further his education.

In the meantime while the child was less than one year old, the legislature in Topeka, Kansas, had passed the act organizing the University of Kansas which Governor Carney approved on March 1, 1864. Several years previously (1859) the Presbyterian Church and others interested had begun a school building on the brow of Mount Oread. Active work in completing the building was begun in 1865 and continued in 1866, enabling the Board of Regents to set the opening date on September 12, 1866.

The subsequent growth of the University is recorded history. This narrative will interleave the events in the career of a great musical genius into the events of the development of a great University. To do this, the story must return to Germany.

Continuing his serious piano study, often practicing five hours a day of his own volition, Carl Preyer gave his first recital in 1876, at the age of thirteen years. It was felt he was ready to enter the Stuttgart Conservatory of Music, which step he did take, completing a five-year period of study in piano, theory, and composition in 1881. Very little is known of his teacher Allwens or of his development at this time except that he was required to practice with cramped high finger action, a faulty method which he later had to spend much effort to correct.

At the age of fourteen the boy became very ascetic, gave up eating meat (but not for long), and grew very meticulous in his theoretical exercises. It was painful to him to make even one mistake. He made permanent copies of his corrected exercises which were unfortunately lost during his subsequent emigration to America. He used to carry a small notebook of music manuscript paper in his pocket to jot down musical themes as they came to him. Thus it is noted that early in his life Carl Preyer was beginning to hear glorious melodies.

Obviously he developed an intense love of music while yet living in Pforzheim. Often in the middle of the night when some musical strain



was running through his head, he would go downstairs and play the tune over and over on the piano.

When the lad was ten years of age, he had severe typhoid fever. In the state of delirium often seen in this disease, he was so insistent about his piano that his father, in an effort to keep the sick child in bed, rented a piano keyboard without strings and had it placed on the side of his bed so young Carl could run his fingers over the keys and maintain their flexibility.

After the jewelry business failed as a result of the Franco-Prussian war, Jean Preyer visited his brother Christian in Holland. In September, 1879, he very suddenly decided to come to America, doing so without his family. He followed his trade of jeweler and engraver for a time in Newark, New Jersey, and then came on west to Leavenworth, Kansas.

In the meantime Christian Preyer went to Germany, re-established the jewelry business, and placed its administration in the hands of his sister-in-law, Carl's mother. Carl visited his uncle Christian after the latter's return to Holland. From there he was called back to Pforzheim because of the fatal illness of his mother, arriving home just three days before her death. Fate struck its second blow at the sensitive, shy young musician. At seventeen he had lost his mother, who had been a constant source of encouragement in his musical career.

At the age of eighteen, Carl Preyer emigrated to America to live with his uncle, Adolph Heinz, in Newark, New Jersey. He began his teaching career in that city, being considered at the time the finest pianist in Newark. While still living with his uncle he met Otto Schell, a very talented violinist and friend of his student days at the Stuttgart Conservatory. They were overjoyed to see each other again, and soon the two were playing violin and piano duos. The story is told that on one occasion the windows in the Heinz's residence were open and the beautiful violin and piano music drew a crowd of listeners, the streets being lined with people for several blocks. "Absorbed as that great crowd was in listening to the exquisite music, it was so quiet one could hear a pin drop. Truly a great tribute to two great artists!" according to Carl's sister, Mrs. Helen Preyer Mayer, who still recalls the incident.

After a brief period of teaching in New York City, the young musician decided to go west, although in later years he told his sister Helen he did not know why he had wanted to do so. His first stop was in Belleville, Illinois, at that time quite a musical town. He often spoke pleasantly of his sojourn there. The next stop was at St. Louis, Missouri. He remained there only a short time and was connected with the piano store of Moxey and Lindemuth.

In 1884, with F. J. Zeisberg, Preyer formed the Jefferson City Conservatory in Jefferson City, Missouri. Obtaining a bank loan, the two men rented a two-story house and hung out their shingles. They rented two pianos and a reed organ. On the second floor they had their sleeping quarters, but they took their meals out. The low price paid for lessons in those days necessitated the dissolution of the Conservatory in a year's time.

The next lap in the journey westward ended in 1886 in Leavenworth, Kansas, where the musician joined his father. While Preyer had been in St. Louis he had met Gus Faas, a piano salesman for the Carl Hoffmann Music Emporium of Leavenworth. Faas persuaded him to go to the latter city.

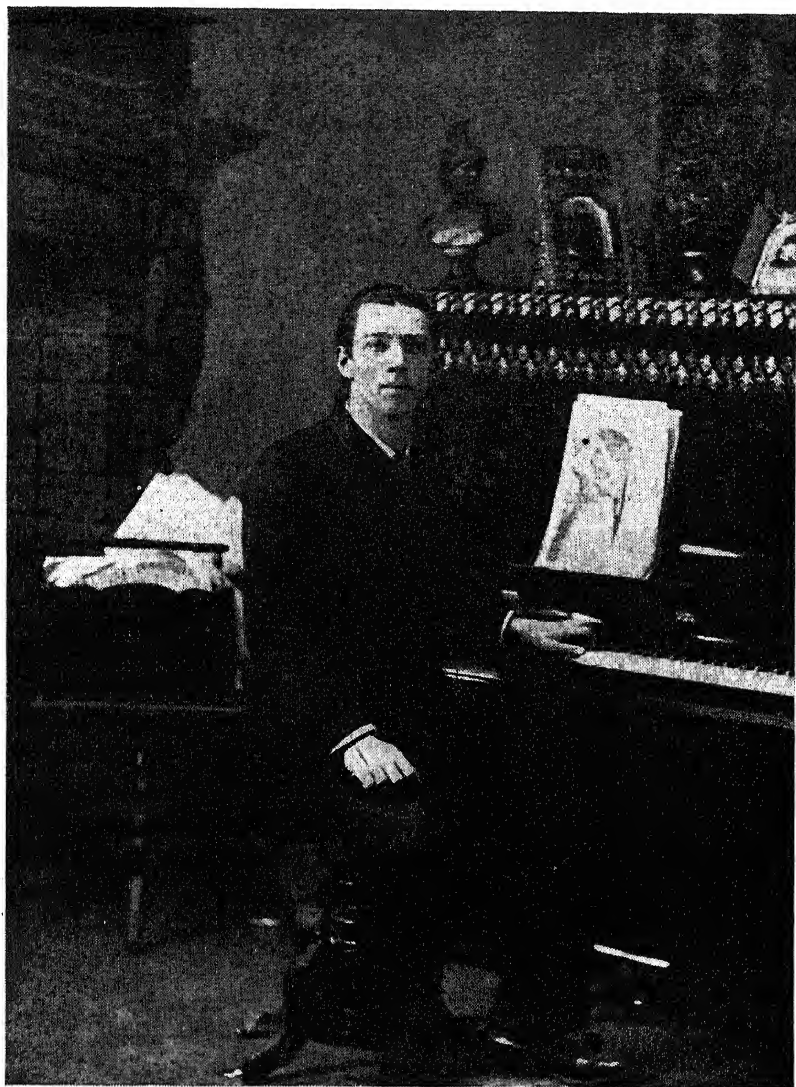
Preyer decided to settle in Leavenworth where his father had been an engraver for some time. He soon became the organist at the First Methodist Church. Singing in the choir at the time was a young girl, Miss Grace Havens, with whom he eloped and to whom was married on May 2, 1887. They had five children; twins Helen and Havens, Frank, Mary, and Grace.

One day his wife's nine-year-old sister, Frances, was not behaving as a little girl should; so Preyer promptly turned her over his knee and spanked her, saying she needed it and if there were no one else to give it to her he would have to do so! Little did he realize that in later years she was to be an unfailing source of love and inspiration as his second wife.

He now found more time to pursue his creative work, and the following year four of his compositions appeared in print: *Op. 9, La Violante (Mazurka Melodieuze)* published by William Rohlfing and Company; *Op. 8, Danse Fantastique*; *Op. 14, Festal Polonaise*; *Op. 25, Dance Hongroise*; the latter three being published by Kunkel Bros., St. Louis. Of these works, the *Danse Fantastique* enjoyed the greatest favor and was played by the composer and his students many times. Although somewhat dated today, it is still an effective work.

During the years Preyer lived in Leavenworth (Illustration II) he made horseback trips across the Missouri river to teach privately at Park College, Parkville, Missouri. The exact dates of his teaching at this institution are unknown since no permanent record of teachers of music who went to the college for independent work was kept.

On May 8, 1889, Jean Preyer died and was buried in Leavenworth. Only two months later, on July 26 and July 31, the young couple lost their first-born children, the twins, who were a little less than one year old.



II. PREYER IN LEAVENWORTH (1887)

Carl Hoffman, who greatly appreciated Preyer's performances, gave him a studio in the Hoffman Music Emporium where he could teach. His reputation soon spread, both as a fine teacher and as a performer. His renown brought an offer from Frank N. Hair, head of the piano department at Baker University, Baldwin, Kansas, of a position as director of music, which he accepted in 1888—a year of significance because it marked the beginning of fifty-nine years of association with two Kansas universities.

Some years later (May 9, 1916) an article in the *Chanute Daily Tribune* read in part: "I recall the first time I ever saw Carl Preyer," said an old Baker university student to The Tribune man. 'He came across the campus, a slight spectacled figure, with the peering look and stoop of the cloistered student. Somebody indifferently said he was the new professor of music. We had not the faintest appreciation of his attainments, his training at the hands of the very elect of music. But presently those higher in the cultural realm began to sing his praises and anon we knew he was lifting the musical department to a high plane . . .'"

After two years as director of music at Baker (1888-March, 1890) the young man, still eager for knowledge, returned to Europe for a year of advanced study. He went to Vienna to consult a specialist because of a chronic throat ailment, to study piano with Leschetizsky, and especially to take advanced counterpoint and composition with Karl Navratil. Theodor Leschetizsky was probably the greatest teacher of concert pianists the world has ever known, and several of the present-day internationally famous pianists were his students. Because of Leschetizsky's illness, Preyer was able to take only a few lessons with him, but in counsels with the master, the young musician gained a great deal. It is known that Leschetizsky spoke very highly of the young pianist from Kansas.

Karl Navratil was a lawyer by profession who accepted only a few private musical theory pupils. He had the remarkable ability of working out and carrying the entire score of a string quartet in his mind before setting it down on paper. He was a composer of many ambitious works of considerable interest and value in their day. Among his other pupils were Mme. Annette Essipoff and Eduard Schütt.

Preyer's study was abruptly brought to an end when an epidemic of cholera in Europe caused his wife Grace to write him to come home at once.

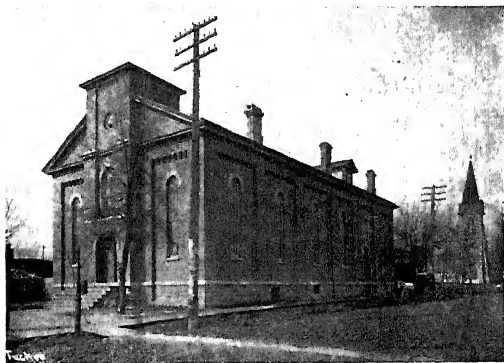
In the summer of 1890, before the arrival of George Barlow Penny to become dean of the School of Music and Art at the University of Kansas, the first building of the institution, old North College, had been completely renovated and prepared for housing the Schools of

Music, Art, and Law. The weekly *University Courier* of September, 1890, carried the following item: "If one would witness the magical transformation of paint, paper, and plaster, he should visit the Old Building. The Collegians may well envy the students of Law, Music, and Art in their new and attractive quarters."

Upon Preyer's return to America in 1891, Dean Penny secured him as head of the piano department at Kansas University. Feeling so discouraged when the first enrollment showed only nine pupils with him, Preyer sent in his resignation two days later. Chancellor Francis H. Snow persuaded him to stay, and a few days later he had fourteen students.

Although Dean Penny realized what a promising young pianist he had secured, it is doubtful that anyone could visualize what a far-reaching influence the young man would have on the subsequent growth of the School of Fine Arts and of music in general in the state of Kansas. To obtain increased legislative appropriations in those early days, Dean Penny and Professor Preyer arranged extra student recitals whenever members of the legislature came to town. Between these two men there developed a deep friendship which continued even after Dean Penny went to Washburn College, Topeka, Kansas, and in 1910 to Rochester, New York, to become one of the original faculty of the then new Eastman School of Music.

The School of Music remained for two years at old North College. In the spring of 1892, Dean Penny announced in the *Weekly University*



III. UNIVERSITY MUSIC HALL OF THE NINETIES

*Courier* "the removal of the School of Music and Art to a more convenient and central location and the acquirement of that indispensable building on the corner of Berkley and Massachusetts, formerly the Methodist Church is the one selected, and is being fitted up at a cost of

\$1,000. The building will be known as Music Hall." The Masonic Temple now stands on this site in Lawrence—the southwest corner of Tenth and Massachusetts streets. (See Illustration III.)

The Art Department was located upstairs in this building, while the Music Department was on the main floor. All the music courses were taught there in a number of small rooms. There were two small front studios used for teaching purposes, but the equipment was rather meager. Professor Preyer's studio and the platform of the small recital hall were on the same level, so that one or both of his pianos could be moved out into the hall when recitals were given. One of the trials of the young professor was the necessity of stopping the buzz saw and other disturbing noises in the nearby building before recitals; another was feeding his own stove and, a few years later, stuffing paper in the cracks of the walls to keep out the bitter winter wind. But Professor Preyer remained undaunted, though he admitted at first that things did not look as good to him as he had thought they might.

Preyer returned to Europe for the second and last time in 1895, having been given a semester's leave of absence from the University. He was accompanied by his wife Grace and their son Frank. He went to the Berlin *Hochschule*, where he was accepted as a pupil of Heinrich Barth, whose training had been with Hans von Bülow and Karl Tausig. Barth, pianist to Emperor Frederick of Germany, was world-famous and attracted many great artists to his studio. Barth was also responsible for part of the early training of Artur Schnabel, one of the commanding figures of the musical world today. Undoubtedly, Preyer had placed himself in the hands of a distinguished teacher, and his experiences and study with Barth were among the most valuable of his life. As a result of his work with Barth, he emphasized more relaxation while playing. His appreciation of the training he had received did not diminish with the passage of many years. Preyer also took composition with Heinrich Urban, one of the greatest teachers of composition Berlin ever boasted. Among his other students were Arthur Bird, Ignace Paderewski, and Josef Hofmann.

In 1895 Olin Bell, founder of Bell's Music Store in Lawrence, Kansas, published Preyer's *Windmill Suite, Op. 31*. It was dedicated to the class of 1895, and each number was a portrait of one of his students. With characteristic reticence he refused to divulge which number was identified with each person, although the author has been recently assured by one member of that class that the portraits were so accurate each person could readily identify his own sketch. The *Windmill Suite*—now out of print—was inspired by the Old Mill, a Lawrence landmark situated

on the highest point of land at the west end of Ninth street which was destroyed by fire in 1905. (See Illustration IV.)

The piano class of 1895 was the first full four-year piano class, previous classes having been graduated at the end of three years. This increase in the amount of time required to graduate in piano was due to Preyer's efforts since he wanted the piano graduates to have had a full course of good training.

A few years later piano majors were divided into two groups: the artist and the collegiate graduate in music. He exercised discrimination in permitting graduating recitals, feeling that his ideals were at stake. Only the very best pupils were given artist diplomas and allowed to give graduating recitals in their senior year; the remaining piano majors received collegiate degrees. How long this procedure continued is not known.



#### IV. THE OLD MILL

Throughout his entire teaching career Preyer was untiring in the matter of rehearsals for performances of his students, giving many extra lessons in an effort to bring the performance to the highest possible level of excellence. He would go up "on the hill" in the evenings to hear students, giving up his own time which could have been devoted to composing or furthering his own pianism. Gifts or flowers from him were always presented to his graduating students, and not infrequently the hospitality of his home was extended to the student's friends and relatives at a reception following the recital. All were thrilled to play their concerto movements to his accompaniment, which always stood as a bulwark against nervous disaster, with his own piano tone shining through but never obtrusive. Many former students have indicated to

the author that playing the concerto in their senior and/or master recital remains highest in their memory because of the joy in performing with Professor Preyer.

On Friday, March 19, 1897, Preyer made his first known appearance with an orchestra in America, appearing as soloist in the Chaminade *Concertstück*, Op. 40, at the Sixth Concert of the 1897-1898 season of the Kansas City Symphony Orchestra. (Illustration V.) Under the direction of Conductor John Behr the program was given in the old Auditorium Theater, Kansas City, Missouri. The review of the concert in the *Kansas City Star* declared: "Yesterday's Symphony concert drew the banner attendance of the season. Among the many strangers present were about fifty from Lawrence, Kansas, who came to Kansas City to hear Carl Preyer as pianist. . . . Mr. Preyer, apparently, is of that modest class of pianists who are best in numbers wherein clean, fluent technique, flowing melody and sonority, rather than brilliant execution, crashing chords and pyrotechnical thunder are prominent. . . . His rendition of the concertstueck, an interesting work from any point of view, was intelligent and good. . . ."

The *Lawrence Journal* contained the following report on March 22: "A car load of sixty people consisting of the entire faculty of the school of fine arts of Kansas university and many of the students, and musical people of Lawrence, went to Kansas City Saturday morning to attend the concert given by the Symphony orchestra, the occasion being the debut of Prof. Carl A. Preyer before a Kansas City audience, which proved to be one of the finest ever gathered in the Auditorium. . . . The Lawrence pianist never played better . . . the result was a beautiful rendering of the work, a most successful debut, prolonged applause, and finally a response with an encore. . . . All were loud in their praises of Conductor Behr and his orchestra . . . but the chief subject of conversation was the splendid playing of Professor Preyer."

In the summer of 1897 Preyer spent his vacation in Colorado, where he appeared in several concerts in Colorado Springs. The *Colorado Springs Evening Telegraph* announced on August 13, 1897: ". . . Undoubtedly the treat of the evening was the playing of Mr. Carl A. Preyer. . . . His first number was the *Staccato Etude* of Rubinstein. Colorado Springs seldom has an opportunity of hearing such an artist as Mr. Preyer. . . . As a composer as well as a pianist Mr. Preyer has taken high rank. . . ."

Preyer's first appearance in Colorado Springs had apparently been in 1890 because the *Colorado Springs Gazette*, on August 13, 1897, contained the following paragraph: ". . . Professor Preyer, the pianist, who won so enviable a position in musical circles when he last played





V. PREYER EARLY IN HIS UNIVERSITY CAREER (1897)

here seven years ago, rendered some selections in a most artistic manner which plainly showed him master of his art, and which were enthusiastically encored. . . ."

A later editorial in one of the Colorado Springs newspapers testifies to the effect of his pianism on the people of that town: ". . . with the piano Prof. Preyer showed the utmost familiarity. His execution is free and his fingering rapid and exact, while his touch is marvelous, with the delicacy of rain drops on the water. . . . He seems to revel in light staccatos, and in these he certainly excels. . . . Altogether it was a high class performance."

On Friday evening, January 14, 1898, a new pipe organ was first publicly used in the University Hall in Frazer Hall. Preyer was piano soloist in the Liszt *Concerto in E flat*. Two second parts were played by Martha L. Wilson of the piano department and by Dean George B. Penny of the organ department, who also dedicated the organ by the performance of some solos.

In 1898 the School of Fine Arts (as it had been known since 1894) moved back to North College, which was repaired again. (Illustration VI). The building was of soft brick, which was not substantial enough



VI. SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS IN 1900

to keep wide cracks from appearing. This necessitated stuffing paper into the walls to keep out the wind coming up from the Kaw valley. The Art Department occupied one room, and Dean Penny, Prof. Preyer, and Prof. Joseph A. Farrell each had a room. A recital hall was on the

second floor. Every room had a stove that burned soft coal. It was each professor's duty to tend his own stove, and it was not unusual for Professor Preyer to have to arise in the midst of teaching a Beethoven *Sonata* to put more coal on the fire.

While in Europe, Preyer had completed the first movement of the *Sonata, No. 1, in C# minor, Op. 33*. Soon after his return to Lawrence, he completed the remaining movements, and in 1899 the work was published by Breitkopf and Härtel, then one of the most discriminating music publishing firms in the world. Preyer performed the work for the Music Teachers National Association in Cincinnati, Ohio. The *Cincinnati Enquirer* under the date of June 23, 1899, had this to record:

"The Sonata in C sharp minor of Carl Adolph Preyer received frantic applause and bravos from some of the most discriminating and difficult among the audience. It is a well written and scholarly work with a good finale, based on a consistently developed original theme."

The composition (lamentably out of print) represents one of the high points in Preyer's career as a composer. It has four movements instead of the usual three; the additional movement is the third, an *intermezzo*. The first movement, *Allegro energico*, opens with a subdued turbulent theme over a throbbing accompaniment that rapidly becomes declamatory. The lyrical second theme, in the mediant key, develops into the same forcefulness that the first theme showed and leads to an agitated development section notable for its compact craftsmanship. In the recapitulation it is found that modification of the enunciation section can lead to a deeper exploration of the original thematic ideas and to a coda of great impressiveness.

The second movement, *Andante espressivo*, in three-part form, shows a true melodic sense. The melody rises to a height of harmonic richness in its middle section, producing a tension that dies down only after two cadenzas. Its ending shows what can be done with economy of harmony.

The lightness of the third movement, *Allegretto scherzoso*, furnishes admirable contrast to the other movements. This movement is so effective as a separate concert number that it has been used thus by several faculty members and students on various programs at the University of Kansas and elsewhere.

The fourth movement, *Allegro molto vivace*, in sonata-allegro form, resumes the agitated effect found in the first movement, the first theme being of almost irascible vigor. The second theme is notable for abrupt endings of each phrases on accented offbeats producing an

effect of soaring flight. The development gives no rest from the general onrushing of the movement. After a varied recapitulation, the work closes with a coda of youthful brilliance combined with mature vitality.

Early in his teaching career Preyer felt the need for piano studies which developed musicianship along with technique. In 1899 he was particularly interested in trying to find an etude to develop a certain movement of the left hand from a state of expansion to a state of contraction. Failing to find such a study in the literature, he composed his *Toccata in A, Op. 36, No. 2*, which was awarded a prize in the *Musical Record* magazine competition and was published by Oliver Ditson. Against an airy melody the left hand has a brilliant accompaniment that becomes, in places, a veritable technical whirlwind.

One of the most ingratiating works to stem from Preyer's genius forms the companion piece to the *Toccato*. Originally written in the key of E major, it lay in a stack of unfinished manuscripts for several years until Preyer took it up again, transposed it to D flat major, and put on the finishing touches. It is the *Dialogue without Words, Op. 36, No. 1*, published in 1900 by Ditson. For the present writer it epitomizes Preyer's musical personality, achieving that goal which so few composers achieve: sentiment without sentimentality. Also, it is one of the best examples of distinction of ideas, melodic sense, beautiful balance and proportion, plasticity and richness of harmony—qualities which appear throughout all his works.

Around 1900 the Preyers moved to Kansas City, Missouri, and Preyer commuted to the University of Kansas to teach. Moving back to Lawrence in 1903, he started weekly journeys to Kansas City in order to continue to give advanced students in that area an opportunity for study which, otherwise, they would not have had. In this way, he spread the influence of the School of Fine Arts and gained indirectly more students for the University. His studio was in the old Pepper building, now the Studio Building, at Ninth and Locust streets. Among other musicians having studios in this building were Carl [later Sir Carl] and Mrs. Busch. The three musicians soon became close friends, and the results of this friendship will be touched upon later.

The following account, written by a pupil of Preyer, throws light on the School of Fine Arts as it was in the fall of 1901. "There was an enrollment of less than two thousand" in the University. "Spangler was acting chancellor and the Music School was housed in old North College. It was an ugly old building perched uncertainly on the point of the hill above the river, into which it seemed about to topple back-

wards. The first time I opened its forbidding looking front door and stepped inside I was enveloped in an overpowering odor of boiling cabbage that floated up from the janitor's quarters in the basement. . . . The smell rose to the accompaniment of scales from Mr. Preyer's piano students on the first floor and Mr. Penny's voice students on the second floor. Mr. Preyer's studio was a big room at the right of the central hall, completely unfurnished except for the two concert grand Chickering pianos, but it was flooded with sunshine. Sunshine that seemed symbolical of a world of beauty that would open for the students of that great teacher. He had no assistant that year and had to listen for long hours to scales and exercises. . . He was always the soul of patience, in complete contrast to his teacher, of whom he often talked. The great Leschetizsky's temper seemed invariably to be loosened on the young lady whose lesson preceded Mr. Preyer's. 'Poor girl, she always came out in tears.' . . ."

"One snowy night a group of us were walking home after having great bowls of steaming oyster stew at Wiedemann's. As we reached the thirteen hundred block on Tennessee we heard piano music. It came to us clearly on the frosty air and then we saw, through the lighted windows of the home of a faculty member, Mr. Preyer sitting playing to the listening group of men, the Old and New Club of Lawrence. And we, the unseen audience, stood outside in the snow and the star light, unmindful of the cold—of all else save the beauty of the music."

Another former student has contributed the following comments on the situation in old North College: "It was fun to go in to take a lesson about four in the afternoon when Mrs. Preyer sent up his hot tea or coffee and some edibles to go with it. North College classrooms were so barren and cold that we often sat around the stove with our feet on the cinders, so to speak."

On May 28, 1904, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra appeared in Lawrence as part of the First May Musical Festival at the University. The program was held in the Spooner-Thayer Museum building. Under the conductor Adolph Rosenbecker, Prof. Preyer played the first movement of the Rubinstein *Concerto in D minor*. The music festival was under the direction of Charles Sanford Skilton who, in 1903, had succeeded Penny as Dean of the School of Fine Arts.

The musical personalities of Skilton and Preyer were immediately congenial, each being a composer in his own right, each being a quiet, proficient musician, each being a master of his own composing idiom. There developed a friendship between them which grew deeper through the years and was only terminated by Skilton's death on March 12, 1941.

It was Skilton who invested Preyer with the title of "the Chopin of the Mid-West" because of the poetic content of his music and the fact that most of his writing was for piano solo. The two men alternated in taking charge of the summer school for several years, thereby enabling the other to have a full vacation each second year.

Two anecdotes give some insight into the relationship between these two Kansas musicians. During one year Skilton lectured to one of his classes on Wagnerian operas. He asked Preyer to prepare and play the Liszt transcriptions and paraphrases of well-known airs from one of these operas each week. This achievement, unknown to many, was one of the many difficult tasks Preyer accomplished in his lifetime.

Skilton's interest in and contributions to the field of music of the American Indian are too well known to be developed here. He asked Preyer to transcribe two of his orchestral settings of Indian dances for piano. Skilton was very pleased with the transcriptions, and the two numbers, *Deer Dance* and *War Dance*, were published in 1921 by Carl Fischer, New York City. Both are very effective when performed, although they require adequate technical facility.

Skilton and Preyer often played piano or piano and organ duos on faculty recitals that never failed to thrill the students. The two men talked about and played their compositions for each other, the relationship being one of continued stimulation.

In an article on Preyer's compositions in the *Graduate Magazine* of the University of Kansas for May, 1906, Skilton wrote the following commentary on his friend's work:

"...Prof. Preyer's talent always manifests itself in forms of graceful, elegant and optimistic beauty with a subtlety of finish that is sometimes baffling to the student but always a delight to the artist. He abhors the commonplace and in all the twelve studies it would be impossible to find one trite or hackneyed phrase or one passage that was not an organic growth. Even the closing chords are manipulated in such a way that they reveal new meanings and show their relationship to the whole composition. . .

"But in general he follows the modern tendency to avoid the larger forms and feelings and express in compact outlines the fugitive moods of life and the 'fancies that broke through language and escaped.'"

Preyer quite naturally developed friendships with early faculty members in departments other than music. One of these was with William Herbert Carruth, professor of German language and literature, and author of the famous poem "Each in His Own Tongue." Carruth translated some words of a Spanish poem for which Preyer supplied

the melody and accompaniment. The resulting work, *A Spanish Song*, Op. 42, No. 1, was published by Oliver Ditson in 1903. Carruth, who was also a musician, often sang this work. While the setting was characteristically well done, Preyer did not rank it among his favorite creations. Carruth also furnished a translation for the words to *The Heart*, Op. 42, No. 2.

As an expression of their esteem, the class of 1905 presented Preyer with a silver loving cup. The next year he was given a leave of absence from the University. He and his wife Grace went to California, where he did some teaching and accompanying. Three great artists received admirable support from his accompaniments, Mme. Francisca, Sig. Russo—and the internationally famous Fritz Kreisler! In an article reporting a recital given at the Simpson Auditorium, Los Angeles, by Mme. Francisca and Sig. Russo, the *Los Angeles Express* offered this comment:

"In their pianist the singers were particularly fortunate. Carl Adolph Preyer is a name often seen on serious piano compositions and, now that he recently has come to this city, is a strong addition to the pianistic forces. Last night he offered the Liszt *12th Rhapsody* and the Rubinstein *Staccato Etude*, out of a modesty unheard of in pianists, omitting a phantasia programmed from his own pen. Mr. Preyer is a scholarly musician, and a pianist of solid attainments, as proved by his performance of these works."

From another newspaper clipping comes the following statement: ". . . At a recent concert the pianist accompanied Fritz Kreisler, the violinist, and before the audience expressed his [Kreisler's] pleasure and approval of Mr. Preyer's exquisite accompaniment."

During his California stay a petition was circulated and generally signed addressed to the Kansas University board of administration asking that Carl A. Preyer's professorship be held open for him when his year's leave of absence expired. In commenting upon the matter Chancellor Strong stated that there was no question regarding the desire of the board of administration for the return of Prof. Preyer to his work and that he considered the petition more of a general expression of good will on the part of everyone toward Prof. Preyer and hoped that it would have weight in bringing him back to Lawrence when his year in California was over.

Although Professor Preyer was in constant demand as a pianist on the Pacific coast, and had gained a wide reputation in that region, he returned to Lawrence and his activities on Mount Oread. He must have felt somehow his personality was peculiarly fitted into the scheme

of things at Kansas University, because this was but one of several instances when he could have forsaken his academic teaching career and pursued a concert career with signal success.

As previously mentioned, Preyer early recognized in his teaching career the need for piano studies which would develop *pari passu* musicianship and technique. Having been subjected to the regimentation of dry academic technical studies in his early Pforzheim and Stuttgart training, he naturally rebelled at having to enforce these methods on his own students. In 1906 Ditson published his *Studies for the Development of Rhythm and Expression, Op. 44, Books I & II*. In the preface to those studies, the teacher-composer wrote:

"A multitude of piano studies have been published and many are in use, yet with all this variety there still remains a field for studies in Rhythm and Expression of moderate difficulty.

"In order to awaken and keep the interest of the pupil, it is necessary to get away from the dry and mechanical etude of former days; and it has been the author's endeavor, in this as well as previous efforts, to add to the rather limited class of studies fulfilling this requirement. This work in particular was written with a view of giving miniature examples of many different styles of piano compositions as well as to accustom the student to the whims and fancies of the modern school.

"The studies are carefully edited as regards phrasing, fingering, marks of expression, and the use of the pedal, and their purpose would be largely defeated if the teacher did not insist upon an exact observation of these points."

Perusal of the list of compositions on page 87 will reveal to the reader what a contribution to the literature of piano technique this paramount Kansas composer made. Perhaps more than any other accomplishment the various piano studies brought the attention of Eastern pianists and teachers to the middle west and to Kansas University.

The year 1907 was one of both tragedy and triumphs for Carl Preyer. His wife of twenty years died of pneumonia, a serious loss to a relatively young man with three children. Before her death he had been developing the themes of a work for piano and orchestra. This was completed during his summer vacation at Walloon Lake, Michigan, where he could compose on his porch while looking out over the water. It was the *Concertstück, Op. 49*. Written originally for piano with accompaniment of a second piano, it was orchestrated by Sir Carl Busch. Both the original two-piano version and the orchestral parts were published by Breitkopf and Härtel in 1908.



The *Concertstück* opens with a brilliant introduction of chords and octave passages, after which the first theme is presented by the orchestra and embellished by the piano. The second subject is of an appealing song-like character, while the third is martial and of rugged power. In the development section the two first subjects appear in other keys, a notable passage being the chain of trills which accompany the song theme in the orchestra; in the recapitulation the themes are treated in new ways, and there is a solo cadenza for the piano near the end in which they are represented from a still different point of view. It closes with a brilliant coda on the first subject.

It was first performed on the May 9, 1908, concert of the Fifth May Music Festival of the University. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Adolph Rosenbecker accompanied Preyer. Concerning the work, the composer said: "There is no particular 'story.' I never write from a story, but go at it and work out an idea as it comes to me. . . ."

After a study of the *Concertstück*, Sir Carl Busch remarked: "In this concert piece Carl Preyer has added a highly artistic work to his already large and valuable list of piano compositions. There is a poetic freshness and originality about the composition that will appeal to any American, and a close examination of the score shows workmanship of a high order. That the purely pianistic side is well looked after goes without saying; at the same time none but a pianist of high musical attainments and reliable technical equipment can hope to do justice to this work, which, together with the same author's sonata for piano, justly places him in the front rank of our native composers. Hurrah for Kansas!"

At the second concert of the 1912-1913 season of the Kansas City Symphony Orchestra at the Schubert Theater on December 3, 1912, Preyer appeared as soloist in the *Concertstück* with the orchestra under the baton of Sir Carl Busch. Karl Walter, the *Kansas City Star's* music critic, wrote the following appraisal in his December 4 review: ". . . Kansas City already knew something of Carl Preyer, but did not know his *Concertstück*, a sound modern work that places him among the ambitious composers of America. It is inspired with energetic purpose and written with a fine regard for the possibilities of the combination of piano and orchestra. The elaborate, even brilliant, treatment does not obscure the clear outline of its themes, themselves interesting enough. . . . The orchestration is less elaborate than the solo part, but is saved from becoming a mere accompaniment by a free and pleasing use of sustained melody. Mr. Preyer played with a charming delicacy of interpretation. . . ."

The next performance of the work was in St. Louis, Missouri, on March 2, 1919. Preyer was again the soloist, this time accompanied by

the St. Louis Symphony under Max Zach. Richard Spamer, reviewing the program in the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* of March 3, wrote: ". . . For what we heard was much, yes, much more than a concert piece. The entire composition was surcharged with the thought and feeling of something vastly greater and to which the designation 'piece' did not apply save for the modesty of the composer and interpreter. . . . The manner of Dr. Preyer's presentation left little doubt that the executant could easily divorce himself from the schoolmasterly manner of playing, there was in his work so much genuine though subdued enthusiasm; so much of staid though restrained feeling, so much of many exuberances and true love for the art. These impressions were further borne out by Dr. Preyer's encore, his 'Dialogue Without Words,' an intimate whispered conversation deftly played, again intimating that the virtuoso in the artist had not been quite effaced by professional scholasticism. Dr. Preyer made a fine impression and the applause showed the state of mind he had conjured up in his listeners."

Several additional performances of the work with the master soloist were given, including a performance before the Kansas City Musical Club in April, 1909. It was presented by the Tulsa Civic Symphony on December 9, 1930, with one of Preyer's pupils, Miss Patti Johnson, as the soloist. The *Tulsa Daily World* review reported: "Last night the Tulsa Civic Symphony shared honors in its first concert of the current season with a composer and a pianist of the southwest and at the same time made a distinct innovation in bringing a Tulsa musician back home to be its soloist. . . . The fact that a Tulsa girl completing her third year of work at Kansas, returned home to play with the orchestra, and that the number she played was the composition of her famous teacher made the performance one of extraordinary interest. . . . It was all very thrilling, and immensely satisfying as well to feel that the orchestra, essentially a community organization and primarily interested in the development of the finest in music in this section of the country, should have summoned to its aid in realization of this goal so gifted a composer and so able a performer of his work. The *Concertstück* is a brilliant number, full of verve and quick, vigorous rhythms. An occasional passage of lovely, flowing melody was vivid contrast with the vivacity of the number as a whole; the piano solo was especially beautiful and one brief strain was so poignantly wistful as to make the throat ache. . . ."

The latest performance of the work by a symphony orchestra was on Thursday and Friday, November 21 and 22, 1935, when the Kansas City Philharmonic Orchestra under Karl Krueger presented it. Miss Ruth Orcutt, then of the K. U. piano faculty, was the soloist. Minne K. Powell, the *Kansas City Star's* music critic, had the following impressions

in her column on November 22: ". . . Carl Preyer's 'Konzertstueck' for pianoforte and orchestra proved a brilliant reminder of the creative musical talent in our neighboring university faculties. . . . Last night, Miss Ruth Orcutt, a concert pianist of splendid gifts, was at the piano, the composer, Professor Preyer, in the audience. She has plenty of power and gave to the dazzling chromatics a virtuoso sparkle and speed that made the more lyrical and romantic passages the lovelier by contrast. . . ."

The work has received several other performances on faculty and student recitals at the University, each time revealing its composer as a man of particular distinction in writing in the piano idiom and each time proving a worthy addition to the limited literature of quality works for piano and orchestra.

Returning to 1907 and another triumph, it should be pointed out that a Kansas City paper carried the following under a caption "Carl A. Preyer Has Written a Notable Scherzo": "Carl A. Preyer, head of the music department of the State University of Kansas, has the distinction of having written a scherzo, which Mark Blumenberg, editor of the Musical Courier, the leading musical magazine of the country, pronounces the best of the past decade. Praise like this is praise indeed, for Mr. Blumenberg speaks with authority on both side of the Atlantic. He takes the trouble to write the following in the current number of the Courier:

"'A *Scherzo in B flat minor*, by Carl A. Preyer, is one of the best piano pieces I have come across in a decade, from the pen of a modern composer. This work is big and bold and dramatic, and in treatment follows the Chopin idea, which raised the scherzo form from a mere dance jingle to almost epical proportions and significance. Pianists will find that the Preyer composition lies well under the fingers and possesses a verve, sincerity and melodic attractiveness which will not fail of effect with an audience. If some of its figurations suggest Chopin, and certain of its harmonic episodes bring Grieg to the memory, then Preyer merely proves that he has chosen the best models. A combination of Chopin and Grieg must ever be good, although of imitation in the ordinary sense there is no trace in the present scherzo. The resemblances were merely in the spirit. Breitkopf and Härtel are the publishers of the Preyer opus, which deserves exceptionally well of the key clawing fraternity.'

"In this warm encomium local critics are pleased to join. Carl Busch praises the scherzo in unstinted terms and Prof. G. B. Penny devoted a portion of his Friday afternoon lecture to it.

"'The West does not realize the talent which is here,' said Prof. Penny. 'Mr. Preyer and Mr. Busch are known throughout the musical world, but they are so modest that they are practically unknown here and

probably could not give a paying concert on the strength of their local reputation. Breitkopf and Härtel, the big Leipzig publishers, eagerly seize anything that Mr. Preyer writes and he is far better known in Boston, New York, Leipzig, and Berlin, than in Kansas City. We must broaden out and lose some of our provinciality, welcome music for its art's sake instead of worshipping at the shrine of some big name and pretend to culture.' "

On Saturday afternoon May 11, 1907, Preyer appeared as soloist in the Liszt *Concerto in E flat* during the Fourth May Music Festival accompanied by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Alexander von Fielitz conducting.

In April, 1909, Preyer was visiting soloist for the Kansas City Musical Club in a performance of his own works, including the *Concertstück*, assisted by Professor Joseph A. Farrell, head of the voice department, who sang a group of his songs.

At a concert given in Lawrence, by the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Emil Oberhöffer conducting, Preyer played the Liszt *Hungarian Fantasy* on Friday, April 22, 1909.

On May 19, he introduced in Kansas City, Missouri, his *Sonata in F minor Op. 50*, which still exists in manuscript. For some reason Preyer felt in later years that this work was one of his lesser productions and was reluctant to have it performed. Nevertheless, the composition "demonstrated his right to a place among the best of the world's composers," according to the *Kansas City Post's* critic. Together with his *Variations on an Original Theme in A minor, Op. 32, Sonate in C sharp minor, Op. 33, Concertstück, Op. 49, and Scherzo in B flat minor, Op. 48*, it showed a mastery of large forms and a subtle comprehension of the piano style.

Only one other notice of a performance of this work has been uncovered. The composer-pianist played it on November 2, 1911, at the Fourth Annual Convention of the Kansas State Music Teachers Association in Lawrence. The third movement was subsequently published in 1917 as *The Brook-Nymphs* by White-Smith Publishing Company, Boston. It has received many performances.

On September 11, 1909, the composer married Miss Frances Havens, his first wife's sister in Kansas City, Kansas, after eloping for a second time. Their daughter Emily has become a composer in her own right, with a decided penchant for writing children's songs and lyrics.

When the Preyer family lived at the south end of Massachusetts street in Lawrence in a section known as "Breezedale," Preyer and his son Frank built a studio back of the house; this structure still stands.

Much of the composing during the years 1910-1924 was done in this studio, where an organ also was installed.

In order to have a grand piano on the third floor of his Breezedale home, Preyer had an elaborate scaffolding built on the front of the house and, by an engineering feat of no small proportion, a nine-foot Chickering grand piano was elevated to the third floor, where part of the front wall of the house had to be torn down in order that the piano might be moved into a room.

One characteristic about Preyer was his habit of smoking small cigars. He had begun smoking at the age of *eight* while still in Germany. Desiring to be able to smoke while practicing and composing, he invented a wire device which was suspended from the ceiling, coming down to a loop to hold the cigar at mouth level. How successful this invention was is uncertain, but its production is an interesting sidelight in Preyer's life during the years he lived in "Breezedale."

Another opportunity for appearance with orchestra presented itself when Preyer played the last two movements of the Saint-Saëns *Concerto in G minor* with the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra under Emil Oberhoffer at the Ninth Annual Music Festival. The program was given in Robinson Auditorium on the University campus on Friday, April 19, 1912. The performance of the *Concertstück* by the Kansas City Symphony under Sir Carl Busch on December 3 of this year has already been mentioned.

When the Xi chapter of Phi Mu Alpha, honorary musical fraternity, was formed at the University in May, 1914, Preyer was made a charter member. About this time he accidentally ran a pair of manicure scissors through his right hand and for an entire school year could not use this hand for playing. However, he made up for the lack of it by using his left hand when playing on the second piano with his students. As one pupil has explained it, "He managed to make it sound as if he were using both hands"!

In March, 1915, Preyer cranked his first car, a Model-T Ford, too energetically and as a result suffered a muscular strain and, presumably, an injury to a nerve in his right arm. He was given a leave of absence from the University and took the opportunity to go to Pasadena, California, in June, accompanied by his wife Frances and his daughters Emily, Grace, and Mary. While in California he made the acquaintance of Miss Olga Steeb, a fine young concert pianist. She was very much captivated by his *Scherzo in B flat minor, Op. 48*, and included it on her programs. Later she gave a performance of the work on a concert in Lawrence.

Returning to the University in the fall of 1915, after refusing an offer to become head of the music department of Redlands University, California, he was made Associate Dean of the School of Fine Arts, declining to accept a full deanship offer from Chancellor Frank Strong. Later he refused a second appeal from Chancellor Strong. While he felt himself incapable of carrying on the administrative work of the School, he had definite ideas and desires about what the curriculum should include. It was in his nature to teach and compose, leaving executive work to others. He held the position of Associate Dean until his retirement in 1939.

A concert given in St. Joseph, Missouri, on Friday, March 10, 1916, represents a typical example of the programs by the pianist in those days:

# I

TOCCATA AND FUGUE.....*Bach-Tausig*

# II

SONATA OP. 27, No. 2.....*Beethoven*

Adagio sostenuto

Allegretto

Presto Agitato

# III

TOCCATA, OP. 7.....*Schumann*

NOCTURNE, OP. 15, No. 1.....*Chopin*

ETUDE, OP. 10, No. 7.....*Chopin*

GAVOTTE .....*Gluck-Brahms*

DANCE .....*Debussy*

# IV

HUMORESKE .....*Preyer*

CONSOLATION .....*Preyer*

THE BALLET DANCE.....*Preyer*

COMBAT .....*Preyer*

SCHERZO IN B FLAT MINOR.....*Preyer*

# V

BIRD SERMON .....*Liszt*

TARANTELLA .....*Liszt*

Because of Preyer's retiring and reticent nature it was only through strong pressure from his colleagues and friends that he agreed to include his own works on his programs. It was on a program such as the above that one listener wrote opposite Preyer's name "Singing Fingers," because he could make the instrument really *sing*. He always concerned himself with the articulate, expressive, lyrical tonal voice of the piano. His piano also *spoke* because music was his medium of expression at times and went further than mere words.

On June 21, 1916, at the Annual Convention of the Missouri Music Teachers Association at Carthage, Missouri, a performance of the *Violin Sonata in F major, Op. 51*, was given by Wort S. Morse. Its movements are marked *Allegro moderato, Andante con variazione, Rondo*. The work has not been published.

Although it was in disreputable condition, North College remained the home of the Fine Arts School until the spring of 1917. Crowded conditions often made it necessary for as many as three teachers to use the same studio. Chancellor Strong and Dean Harold L. Butler (who had succeeded Skilton as Dean in 1915) urged the provision of new quarters, but nothing was done until the building was declared unsafe by the state architect.

According to Coulson, "This occurred in January, 1917, following the dismissal of classes by Professor Skilton when a high wind shook the old building. The previous year, classes had been dismissed on two occasions when the wind blew so hard that several bricks fell from the walls and chimneys. Finally, steps were taken to abandon the building which, for twenty-six years, had been the home of the music department."

The School was moved to a rented private frame building at 1406 Tennessee Street, where it remained until the summer of 1919, when it was moved in one night to its present location in Frank Strong Hall. It has been rumored that this rapid action was necessary to prevent opposition to the school's having quarters in Frank Strong Hall.

On April 4, 1918, Preyer appeared as chief soloist for the Kansas City Musical Club at a program held in the Athenaeum, Kansas City, Missouri. Minne K. Powell, the *Kansas City Star's* music editor, in her review under date line of April 5, made the following statements which reveal insight into Preyer's creativeness: "Among the musicians who choose the compensations of a western studio to the advantages of an eastern one, is Carl Preyer. . . . More important to pianists was the *Sonata in C sharp minor*, but to the ordinary concertgoer the little pieces, with their revelations of the man behind the music, were the treasures

of the program. It is, after all, in the small melodies that a composer discloses his personality. Beyond these, much of what he does is craftsmanship and counterpoint. . . . It may be imagined that Mr. Preyer wrote the 'Combat' to symbolize some personal victory, for its conflict is entirely joyous, full of smashing chords and a half submerged song of triumph. The encore was a little serenade, fresh hearted, ingratiating—not to be resisted by the flintiest of maids. . . . To say that Mr. Preyer, pianist, was subjugated to Mr. Preyer, composer, is to say that for once the interpretative and creative were properly related. Although he is a pianist of distinction, the audience may have easily forgotten this, in view of the richness of his offerings as a composer. . . ."

*The Combat*, referred to in this review, was one of three numbers in *Opus 55*, published by the Musicians' Publishing Company, Los Angeles, in 1915, as a result of Preyer's second visit to California. The other two numbers include *No. 1, Consolation*, which has been played by many admirers and students of the composer, and *No. 2, The Ballet Dancer*. The three numbers were often programmed as a group by the composer-pianist. The *Serenade* is one of his lovelier early works, being included in his *Windmill Suite, Op. 31*.

An article appeared in the *University Daily Kansan* on April 17, 1919, under the caption, "Prof. Preyer Custodian of New \$10,000 Organ": "Prof. Preyer, associate dean of the School of Fine Arts, is to be the custodian and organist of the new \$10,000 organ which will be ready for use in the Scottish Rite Temple April 17." He played both on the Temple organ and for State conclaves in other cities for a number of years.

On Thursday, June 3, 1920, Professor Preyer's daughter Mary was presented in the first master's piano recital given at Kansas University and became the first candidate for the degree of Master of Music.

Professor F. E. Kendrie of the violin faculty and Professor Preyer appeared in the first recital of piano and violin works at the University for many years on January 4, 1921. The performance in Fraser Hall included:

SONATA IN A MAJOR, OP. 47.....	Beethoven
SONATA, NO. 2, IN G, OP. 13.....	Grieg
SONATA IN A MAJOR.....	Franck

When the Marvin Memorial organ in the Plymouth Congregational Church in Lawrence, Kansas, was completed, Prof. Preyer was asked to play the dedicatory service. He continued as organist to this church for approximately two years. The date of the organ's dedication—November 12, 1922—is of interest because of the coincidence that Preyer was



buried from the same church to the strains of his own melodies just twenty-five years later, on November 12, 1947.

In 1925, Preyer's *Two Miniatures: Entreaty, Elves*, were published by G. Schirmer, Inc., New York City. Also from about this time dates the *Prelude in C major* which was combined with an *Improvisation* (composed in 1937) and published as *Two Piano Compositions: Improvisation, Concert Etude*, by Edward Schuberth, New York City, in 1938.

Perhaps no other form of musical composition gives one a clearer insight into a composer's musical personality than that of the improvisation. Preyer's *Improvisation* contains true distinction of idea, craftsmanship, positive individuality, depth of philosophy, and imaginative flight found in addition to the rarest of musical gifts—a true melodic sense.

The *Concert Etude* proves that the tonal idiom is far from exhausted when a composer knows how to handle it. Here is an example of carrying the altered chord principle to its logical denouement, but never leaving the realm of tonality. Particularly noteworthy is the great melody used as a counterpoint to the chords of the opening theme when they re-appear in the last section.

Despite the fact that organizations in various towns had already presented Preyer tribute programs, it was only in 1926 that the first of this type of program was arranged in Lawrence. The Music Club of Lawrence presented him in a recital of his own compositions assisted by Professor William B. Downing, baritone of the voice faculty, and Professor Waldemar Geltch, head of the violin faculty. The program was given on Wednesday, December 1, in Frank Strong Hall Auditorium:

- I. ANDANTE CON VARIAZIONE  
SONATA IN C SHARP MINOR  
*Mr. Preyer*
- II. HUNTING SONG (WORDS BY SIR WALTER SCOTT)  
*Mr. Downing*
- III. PRELUDE IN C MAJOR  
HUMORESKE IN SECONDS AND FIFTHS  
SERENADE  
MAZURKA IN A MINOR  
*Mr. Preyer*
- IV. SONATA IN G MAJOR, FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO  
FIRST MOVEMENT  
*Mr. Geltch, Mr. Preyer*

The *Andante con Variazione* was an early work which has not been published. The *Prelude in C major* was later published as the *Concert*

*Etude. The Humoreske in Seconds and Fifths*, also known as *Oriental Dance*, dates from around 1925, and still exists in manuscript. The *Serenade* is the one previously mentioned from the *Windmill Suite*. The *Mazurka in A minor* dates from around 1925 and still is in manuscript. It is believed Preyer did not complete the last movements of the *Violin Sonata in G major*.

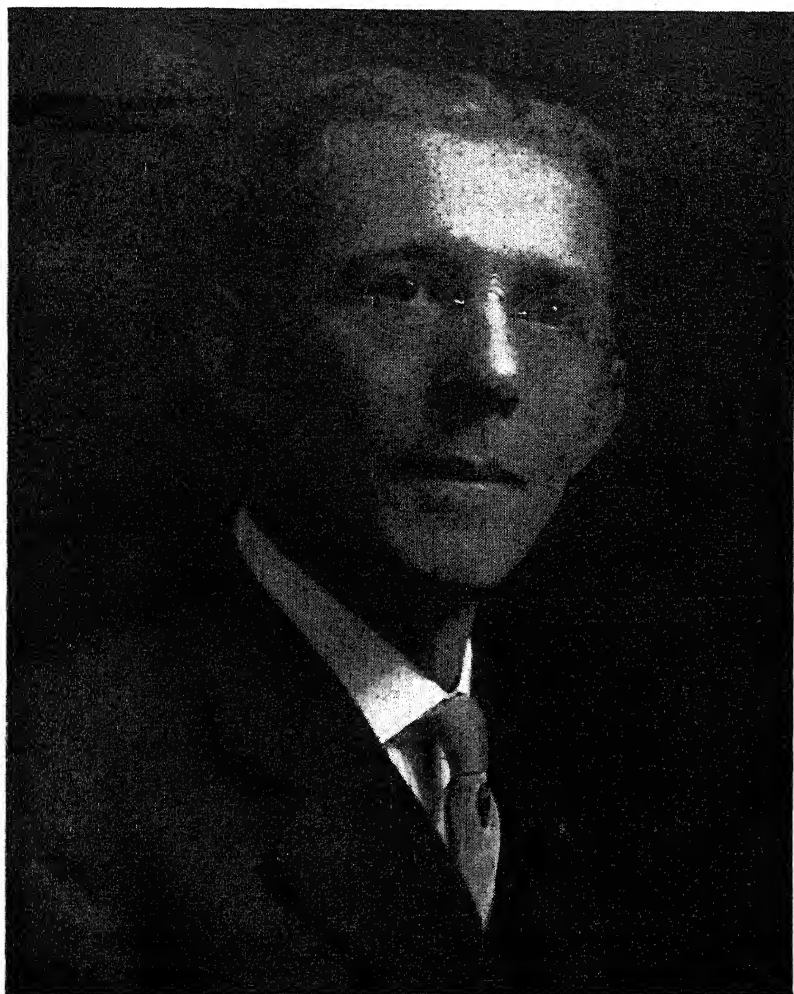
The mazurka form apparently interested Preyer, although he told the author that Poles are the only pianists who can really play these dances. He wrote an early *Concert Mazurka in D flat* around 1909, and during his final summer's vacation in Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, in 1946, completed a *Mazurka in C sharp minor*.

Six days after the program in 1926, Preyer again appeared before the Kansas City Musical Club playing his *Sonata in C sharp minor, Op. 33*. The *Kansas City Times* reviewer the following morning (December 7) commented as follows: ". . . It has the strength and character that comes when a musician with something to impart says it tersely, and then stops. It has melodic and technical interest and shows the reflection of a sensitive and balanced mind. Mr. Preyer played with clarity and finish."

Agnes Lapham, a graduate of the class of 1897 under Preyer, who later studied with Fanny Bloomfield-Zeisler and became very well known as a concert pianist and teacher in Chicago, visited Lawrence about this time and was surprised that the University had not given Preyer more public recognition for his years of fine service. She had been abroad for two years of study and said she was amazed that Preyer and his compositions were better known in Berlin than in Lawrence. She succeeded in arousing so much enthusiasm among the alumni that a committee was formed to execute plans for a gala Preyer Homecoming.

On April 29, 1927, Preyer Day was celebrated at the University. (Illustration VII.) It began with a convocation at ten in the morning at which time Professor Preyer played some of his compositions. Ex-Chancellor Frank Strong was introduced as "the man who had the courage and vision to plan for a most attractive home for music on the campus." He characterized Preyer as a high minded gentleman. "And when you have said that, you have said much. It is not the captain of the industry, the mighty millionaire, but the man that leaves fundamental good will that counts in this world."

Chancellor E. H. Lindley spoke thus: "This beloved man has for thirty-seven years carried the torch of beauty on Mount Oread. While at the University, Professor Preyer has labored not only with his finger tips but also with his mind and heart. He has written compositions which have been appreciated throughout this country. But he has done a still



VII. PREYER IN MIDDLE LIFE (PREYER DAY, 1927)

finer and more difficult thing, he has brought beauty into his own life. And because of this we have come to testify to our affection for him as to his mastery in the field of music and his distinction as a creative artist."

Donald M. Swarthout, who in 1923 had succeeded Harold L. Butler as Dean of the School of Fine Arts, spoke briefly on the two most recent developments in the field of music. The first dealt with the influence of jazz. "Those years have brought with them a new spirit that seemingly disregards what most of us have in mind when we speak of music as art. To many it is mere noise. Nevertheless, it will have its influence for the best. Even Professor Preyer's most recent writings give signs of a somewhat different spirit than his earlier ones, though he has held to that which is fine and sane."

At three o'clock that afternoon a group of Preyer pupils presented a program. A reception was held in the Administration Building following the program, and at six-thirty that evening a banquet was held in the Masonic Temple. At this banquet a testimonial purse of \$1999.99 was presented to him, accompanied by two giant bound volumes of letters of appreciation from his pupils and admirers.

Preyer's great love for people, his exalted opinion of and confidence in his fellow men, explain in part why others held him in such esteem. A perusal of the two volumes of letters given at the time of Preyer Day and of many tributes written after his death reveal recurring statements to the effect: "He is the finest man I ever knew." These words have been written about other men but probably not often with such heartfelt sincerity.

An editorial in the *Kansas City Star* of May 2, 1927, summed up his career having its culmination in Preyer Day: "It was timely and appropriate to have a 'Preyer Day' at the University of Kansas. The day was highly complimentary in its manifestations of appreciation and affection for the man who has been head of the university's piano department for thirty-four years. Twice declining the deanship of the fine arts school. Professor Preyer has preferred to remain within the sphere he loved best and where his service as instructor, composer, and friend has been so helpful to thousands of students. Within this chosen field he has not only been a strong factor in the university, but has helped the institution and himself by building a reputation that is national in scope.

"Kansas City has shared generously with Lawrence in the compositions and interpretations of Professor Preyer. About thirty years ago he first came to Kansas City as a soloist. Shortly afterward he was invited to give a recital of his own compositions, and this invitation has been repeated and accepted a number of times in the intervening years. He has played

not only his piano compositions, but several for piano and orchestra. Considering the scope of his work as a faculty member, he may be classed as a prolific composer. His range has been wide and his work varied. His chief characteristics have been the poetic, delicate qualities of lighter piano music, although he has created works of fine strength and resonance. In addition to his formal compositions, he has written much for students of various stages of advancement, and these compositions have been helpful to many teachers as well as students.

"The cumulative influence of such a musician and teacher as Professor Preyer, placed as he has been for more than three decades, is far-reaching. The high standards to which he has held, the freshness of his views from year to year, expressed in both instruction and composition, and the inspirational quality of service and character have touched many who now are professional musicians and many others whose enjoyment in and of music has contributed much to their happiness."

Since about 1900, Preyer had engaged in sporadic visits to Kansas City to teach. Through the efforts of a former pupil, a large class of advanced students was secured, and around 1927 Preyer resumed making weekly trips to Kansas City. His studios were in Drexel Hall and later in the Rockhill Studio. In this way an opportunity was again given many fine, Kansas City musicians to study with a master and prepare for their public performances. Another result of this effort has later borne fruit in the improved quality of piano instruction by a number of private teachers in that area. Preyer continued these week-end treks for some years, then went every other week-end until his advancing age and heavy University teaching schedule made it advisable to discontinue (sometime around 1935).

Preyer was made a charter member of the Kappa chapter of Pi Kappa Lambda, honorary musical scholastic fraternity, when it was established at the University on December 9, 1927.

Attracted by the melodies of Johann Strauss, Preyer made a *Concert Transcription of Strauss' Thousand and One Nights Waltz* in 1930. The concert pianist, Guy Maier, frequently played the work during the early thirties and declared: "It's a fine, effective piece!" The work was subsequently transcribed for two pianos from which it gained immeasurably. As one reviewer put it: "The whole work takes on a sonority and bigness of style that sweeps one along with it. The delicate variations and arabesques as they embellish the principal theme are tossed from one piano to another in a delightful way, and the climax reaches heights that are truly stirring." The two-piano version has recently been published by Edward B. Marks Music Corporation, New York City. Sometime later,

Preyer also made a *Transcription of Strauss' Morning Journals Waltzes* for both piano solo and two-piano combinations.

In 1911 Preyer had purchased a cabin in Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, where for each summer thereafter (except the period of 1924-1929 and 1940) until 1946, he did a great deal of composing. Many of his most significant later works had their birth in this locale where he enjoyed the majestic scenery with his family. Specific examples will be mentioned later.

With his nature, it was necessary to be living comfortably in the midst of his family in order to do creative work, although he always actually composed in the quiet seclusion of his studio. For this reason an attempt by Mrs. Edward MacDowell to get him to visit the famous Peterboro Colony in Maine was unsuccessful. Characteristically, Preyer felt he could not compose in the Colony so far removed from home and family ties.

He would do almost anything if it pleased a member of his family. When his daughter Mary was a very small child she used to run into his study while he was practicing and interrupt him with: "Play the piece on the black notes, Daddy." He always stopped, smiled, and played the Chopin *Etude in G flat major*.

In 1932 Preyer received a cash prize given by the Kansas State Federation of Music Clubs for the best piano work submitted. It was entitled *Three Miniatures* and consisted of a *Prelude, Cradle Song, and Orientale*, all composed the previous summer in Green Mountain Falls. He played this group at the state convention of the Federation at Pittsburgh on March 31.

Another facet of Preyer's musical personality is reflected in the transcription of his *Autumn Even Song* made in 1932. To conceive a song in which the melody and harmonic structure is so unified with the message conveyed by the words that a piano transcription without words gives the same aesthetic effect is truly the feat of a master.

The summer of 1933 saw the completion of the *Sonata in A major, for violin and piano*, the movements being marked *Allegro vivace, Andante espressivo, Molto vivace*. The first performance was given by Professor Waldemar Geltch on his annual program at the University on January 17, 1934, with the composer at the piano. They gave its second performance on Thursday, February 8, at the Annual Convention of the Kansas Music Teachers Association at Pittsburg, Kansas.

The work has received at least two subsequent performances, each time revealing the composer as possessing a wonderful feeling for writing in this combination, for subtly introducing dialogue between the two instru-

ments, for an exquisite use of the twelve-tone scale combined with diatonic and chromatic modes.

In Green Mountain Falls, while on his usual summer "vacation," Preyer, inspired by a fairy tale he had read, completed in 1933 a *Fairy Legend Suite, Op. 47*. Five of the eight movements originally written for solo piano were soon transcribed for two pianos and in this version it received several performances. Sometime later Professor Karl Kuersteiner, director of the K. U. Symphony, made an orchestration of the work. Its performance in this orchestral version will be noted later. The two-piano version is a very notable addition to the limited literature for two-piano recitalists.

Following a performance of the work by Ruth Orcutt and the composer at a Kansas City Musical Club concert on November 5, 1934, Minne K. Powell, had this to say in the *Kansas City Star*: ". . . Even without knowing more than the music told, listeners must have suspected it was a story of dolldom, with a fairy queen taking a hand in righting the tangled affairs of the hero and heroine. The 'Grief of Punch' with its descending chords was irresistible, as were the 'Imps of Darkness' like Halloween shivers, the 'Magic Wand' and the erratic 'Hobby Horse' with its changing speeds. . . ."

Another composition inspired by a fairy story—this time a story fashioned by the composer and his daughter Emily—is the *Legend of an Old Castle*, a piano suite composed in 1945. These two suites must rank high among that series of compositions, which are full of the authentic spirit of childhood, but which are written primarily for the accomplished musician because of the requirements of delicate approach and interpretation. Works by other composers in this class would include the *Childhood Scenes, Op. 15*, of Schumann, the *Memories of Childhood* of Pinto, Debussy's *Children's Corner*, and Prokofieff's *Peter and the Wolf*. In each instance the composers have had to be simple in their greatness and great in their simplicity.

Preyer's earlier contributions as a pianist and composer to the Music Week Festivals (formerly known as the May Music Festivals) at Kansas University have been mentioned. During the Festival of 1934 a program featuring his compositions was presented on May 8. At this time several works received their first performance. The program follows:

PIANO SOLO: THEME WITH VARIATIONS, OP. 32

*George Trovillo*

SONGS: AUTUMN EVEN SONG\*

THE WATER-LILY LADY\*

*Alice Moncrieff, contralto*

VIOLIN AND PIANO: SONATA FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO IN A MAJOR

*Allegro vivace, Andante espressivo; Molto vivace*

*Waldemar Gelich, Carl A. Preyer*

SONGS: THE WILLOW TREE (POEM BY MARGARET ANDERSON)\*

THE WIND (POEM BY ESTHER CLARK HILL)\*

*Meribab Moore, soprano*

TWO PIANOS: FIVE MINIATURES FROM A FAIRY LEGEND:

Fairy Queen; Grief of Punch; Imps of Darkness;

Magic Wand; Hobby Horse

*Howard C. Taylor, Roy Underwood*

PIANO SOLO: WALTZ "THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS" BY STRAUSS

*Ruth Orcutt*

\*First performance

At the Annual Convention of the Kansas Music Teachers Association, held in Emporia, on Friday, March 4, 1938, a performance of the *Sonata in F major for Violin and Piano Op. 51*, was given by Professor Karl Kuersteiner with Preyer playing the piano part. Concerning this work, Kuersteiner has written:

"... This violin and piano sonata is his choice work. It is full of his characteristic lyrical expression. This is particularly true of the first movement which is an exciting piece of music, full of color and motion. The finale is brilliant and has a rather impish style to it. On one occasion I spoke to Mr. Preyer about a quality in his music which often reminded me of Grieg. Without making any suggestion that anything might be



done about this, he answered, 'I have noticed that myself, unfortunately. I think this shows that he wrote as he felt and would, therefore, be unwilling to attempt any alteration due to any imagined or real similarity with other composers.'

The summer of 1938 found the composer hard at work on a new piano sonata. He numbered it his fourth. A third sonata has apparently been lost or else suffered the fate the composer described when the present writer once asked him what his Opus No. 1 was: "Oh I don't remember, but it wasn't much." To the further query: "But what happened to it?" he replied, "It went the way of all Opus number ones."

The completed *Sonata No. IV, in E flat major*, was submitted to the National Composers' Contest held by the National Federation of Music Clubs the following year. On April 4, 1939, it was announced that the work had been awarded first place in piano composition by the judges, Aaron Copland, Howard Barlow, Charles Haubiel, and Modeste Alloo.

Its first performance was given by a Preyer student, Miss Lucile Wagner, at the twentieth convention of the Kansas Federation of Music Clubs in Winfield on March 9. It was given another performance by Miss Wagner on her master's recital at the University on May 29, 1939, and at the Annual Convention of the Music Teachers National Association and the National Association of Schools of Music held in Kansas City, Missouri, on December 30, 1939.

At the end of the spring semester of 1939, Preyer was formally retired as head of the University's piano department and as Associate Dean of the School of Fine Arts. Although faculty members are supposed to retire when they become seventy-five, Professor Preyer got in an extra year. This was a source of amusement to him, and he offered this explanation: "You see, the budget committee made up its schedules in June while I was still seventy-four. Then I had my birthday in July and was seventy-five during my last year of teaching." Some type of transitory heart ailment prevented his walking down the hill at the commencement of this year of his retirement; inability to do so caused him some personal sorrow and depression.

Hearing that the *E flat Sonata* was to be performed in New York City by George Trovillo, a former pupil of Preyer's, the members of the musical organizations Pi Kappa Lambda, Phi Mu Alpha, and the Lawrence Music Club presented Preyer a check amply covering all expenses to encourage him and his wife to make the trip. The invitational concert on Sunday, December 11, 1940, marked the seventh anniversary of the National Association for American Composers and Conductors and was

made up entirely of works that had won prizes in the National Federation of Music Clubs competition.

The *Sonata*, which appeared last on the program, received much applause. Preyer was told by one critic to keep on writing in his own style and not to "go modern"—but to adopt only as much of the newer idiom as appealed to him. The *Sonata* has been published by Carl Fischer, Inc., New York City, as the result of the efforts of the Preyer Memorial Fund. The reader is referred to the last chapter for detailed analysis of this important work.

While re-visiting in New York between June 7 and August 17, 1940, Preyer could look out of his window across the Hudson river to the line of bold cliffs on the opposite shore. This sight, particularly inspiring at dusk, prompted the first of two *Hudson River Sketches*, the *Palisades*, one of the most captivating of his later works. It is regrettable that the composer felt the cadenza should be omitted in the published version since it is one of the most effective passages in all of Preyer's creations. The cadenza is included in the discussion of this work in the third chapter.

The second of the *Sketches* is titled *Spuyten Duyvil Toccata*. The following anecdote concerns its inspiration. Between Hastings-on-Hudson, a New York suburb, and the city proper there is both a small settlement and a creek called "Spuyten Duyvil," so named because years ago a pioneer, Anthony Corlear, said he was going to pass the mouth of the Spuyten Duyvil creek, a channel connecting the Hudson and Harlem rivers, "in spite of the devil."

This work is a rapid and tempestuous toccata. Virtuosity is not used for display but for achieving the greatest intensity possible and the greatest expansive powers of the piano. Contrasting a fundamental idea of vivid rhythm with passages of virile melody as it done in this work is a feature lacking in most modern toccatas.

Of special interest are three passages where scales are played by both hands in parallel motion but two octaves apart. This rare device is used in Bach piano transcriptions where the organ coupling effects are imitated on the piano and in Spanish piano music. In this composition an entirely new aesthetic effect is obtained by this means, one that reveals the composer's mastery of keyboard resources. The use of interlocking passages, a favorite practice of the master, is very impressive. The positive individuality of Preyer's harmonic structure, which had developed through the years into modernity without atonality or other bizarre, crass, un-aesthetic attributes, is noticeable in this composition.



The *Intermezzo* for piano is the third movement of the *Sonata, No. 1, in C sharp minor, Op. 33*; the *Brook-Nymphs* is the third movement of an unpublished *Sonata in F minor, Op. 50*. The *Childhood* song, a plaintive little work, was published in 1901 by Oliver Ditson as *Op. 37, No. 1*. *The Wind* still exists in manuscript. The *Ballade* (in A flat) was composed in 1938 and is one of the more cryptic of the composer's piano compositions. The *Toccata* was the second of the *Hudson River Sketches*, which have previously been discussed. *The Water-Lily Lady* was composed about 1934 and is an art song, a charming example of the use of Oriental harmonies. Preyer was influenced by this type of music in several compositions: *Oriental Dance* (also known as the *Humoreske in Seconds and Fifths*), the *Oriente* in *Three Miniatures* (composed in 1931), and the vocal setting of *The Twenty-third Psalm*, about which more is written in Chapter IV. The reader is likewise referred to the last chapter for a discussion of *The Lord's Prayer*. The remaining numbers on this program have been previously identified and discussed.

The program was a true cross-section of Preyer's work and it is doubtful that the University will ever be given another opportunity to hear a program of more noble, impressive, and distinguished quality by an American composer.

On July 28, 1941, Professor Preyer reached his seventy-eighth birthday, but that fall found him giving seventeen lessons a week to eleven different pupils. His comment on this situation was: "I just like to do it. It's better to keep in touch with the students." This same year the *Lawrence Daily Journal-World* ran the following editorial:

#### A MAN WORTH WHILE

"There is a man in Lawrence, who has reached the age of seventy-eight, who has been trying to quit his job, but his services are so valuable that his employers have prevailed upon him to carry on. He is working for a big institution and his job requires precision and skill.

"Thousands of men have bemoaned the fact that they have been thrown out of work because they are past middle age, and here is a veteran who is finding it hard to get loose that he may spend a few years of rest and perhaps travel. This is a pleasing story in regard to old men and their value to a business."

Although the editorial did not identify the person about whom it was written, friends of the remarkable man were able to recognize the person.

On March 15, 1942, at a Sunday vesper musicale held in Hoch Auditorium on the University campus, the first movement of a *Quintet in E minor* was performed, the composer playing the piano part. It was his last appearance as a concert pianist. The first performance of the first

two movements of the work had been at the Kansas State Music Teachers Association in Hays, on March 5, 1942. Unfortunately, the third movement has never been performed, and the fourth movement of this massive work was never completed, although the composer had largely developed it in his mind.

The next five years were devoted to a limited amount of teaching and some composition, although the latter activity was seriously handicapped by the composer's failing vision. The mental torture of this handicap was enhanced by the inability to read new compositions of other men, a practice Preyer had long indulged in earnestly and faithfully. To lose contact with the world of piano composition was tragic indeed.

Mention of some of the compositions of Preyer's last years should be made. The *Theme with Variations and Fugue* was begun at Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, in the summer of 1941 and was completed the following winter in Lawrence. It reveals the composer's "complete mastery of keyboard resources and ever-present freshness of inspiration." Its first public performance was given by Ruth Orcutt on her All-American faculty piano program at the University on Wednesday, March 10, 1943.

In April, 1944, he completed a *Sonatina* for piano, one of the most esoteric of his works. The middle movement, a *Theme and Variations*, must rank as one of his most notable later works. It has been published by Edward Schuberth and Co., Inc. The first performance of the entire work was on November 27, 1944, by Allie Merle Conger of the University piano faculty.

Miss Conger and Miss Orcutt had often introduced his piano works to University students, faculty, and friends, and the music-loving public of Lawrence and neighboring towns. To them goes credit for early recognizing the prestige these creations will eventually attain.

Before going to Green Mountain Falls in the summer of 1944, the composer was asked by Miss Orcutt to provide her with a concert number for her annual recital the following winter. He was asked to make it "plenty hard." The resultant *Etude in F sharp minor* is a work which impresses the pianist or listener with its remarkable youthfulness and vitality and is one of the most original and forceful of all the works of the Kansas composer. Together with the *Spuyten Duyvil Toccata* of the *Hudson River Sketches* it represents the acme of virtuosity in its technical demands upon the performer. Its tremendous passages of vigorous melody overlying heavy chordal progressions suggest Scriabine's *Etude, Op. 8, No. 12, in D sharp minor*.

At least four other significant works emerged from the last six years of the composer's life, a *Valse Impromptu*, a *Mazurka in C sharp minor*, a

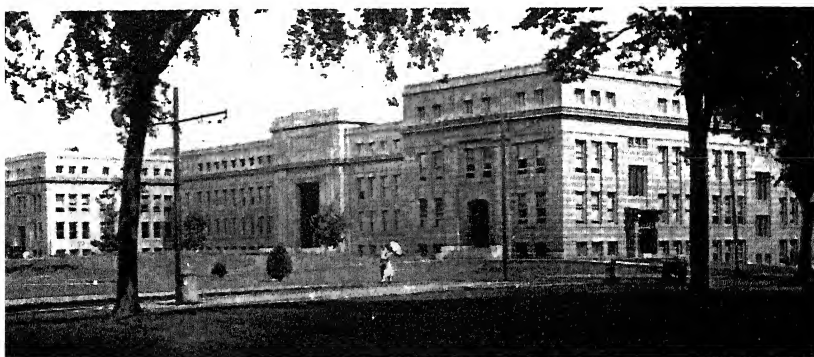
setting for voice of the text of the 121st Psalm "I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes," and a setting of the 23rd Psalm.

Although Preyer had retired in 1939 as head of the University's piano department, he continued (as already indicated) to teach and compose. Two seniors of the class of 1947 were the last to take their degree under his tutelage. While teaching in the spring of this year, he was troubled by the early forebodings of a malignant disease which was to take his life in Kansas City, Missouri, on November 10, 1947. At the time of his death, he had served as head of the piano department under four deans:

George B. Penny (1891-1903)  
Charles S. Skilton (1903-1915)  
Harold L. Butler (1915-1923)  
Donald M. Swarthout (1923-1947)

and five chancellors:

Francis H. Snow (1891-1901)  
William C. Spangler (Acting Chancellor) (1901)  
Frank Strong (1902-1920)  
Ernest H. Lindley (1921-1939)  
Deane W. Malott (1939-1947)



#### VIII. SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS IN 1947

The enrollment had increased from 185 in the School of Music and Arts in the fall of 1891 to 553 in the School of Fine Arts in the spring of 1947. (Illustration VIII.)

On the editorial page of the *Lawrence Daily Journal-World* on November 12, 1947, appeared the following:

"The whole community and hundreds of widely scattered University alumni feel a loss in the passing of Carl Preyer, whose career as teacher, artist and composer covered more than a half century in this country—

two years at Baker University and the remainder at the University of Kansas.

"Professor Preyer's pupils received the best training that an able and sympathetic teacher could give them. As a pianist he entertained large audiences with his brilliant interpretations of the best music through many years. His compositions are held in high regard by leading artists and orchestras.

"The high esteem in which he was held extended beyond the group of his students and fellow artists. His personal qualities won and kept friends. Unassuming and utterly sincere, he moved among his neighbors as the kind of person with whom it is a privilege to be acquainted."

\* \* \*

The reader might logically ask what happened during the years not mentioned in this biography. Continuously there were hundreds of students who took work with Preyer and thousands of Kansas and Missouri music-loving people who were given opportunities to hear him in concerts evincing the tonal luster that gave him his greatest distinction as a pianist. In various ways his life touched so many people, and touched them with such a deep impression, that the total summation of his influence on Kansas University, its graduates, the state of Kansas—indeed, the people of the middle west—is simply incalculable.

It would seem appropriate to include here some anecdotes submitted to the author by former students and admirers of Professor Preyer.

Professor Preyer was perhaps the only University faculty member ever unofficially given a leave of absence from teaching obligations by students. Sometime around 1900, or a little earlier, he received the following letter:

"We the undersigned (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior and Senior Classes of the School of Fine Arts) desire to present you with the week of March 15th to 20th inclusive as a free gift, setting you at liberty from all responsibility of teaching during that time.

"We do this in consideration of the valuable services you render us and the amount of overtime so constantly given at our lessons hours, and also because your success in the concert you will take part in is dear to us both as members of this school and as your students."

The letter was signed by sixteen students.

It is impossible to say how early Preyer recognized the genius of Debussy and Ravel, but it is known that his own programs included Debussy's *Danse* and *Clair de Lune* around 1900, only ten years after their composition in France, and anticipating by some forty years the

current popularity of the latter work. One former pupil relates how amazed she was when she heard the works of Debussy played by Preyer and by his students when she entered the University in 1910. While the names of Debussy and Ravel were known in musical circles in Kansas City, she states they were little more than names. Yet, in Lawrence, students and a music-loving public were constantly being treated to their wonderful harmonic advances through performances by Preyer and his students.

Preyer's hobbies included carpentry, wood-working, and photography. Preyer's construction with the aid of his son of a studio in the back yard of his Breezedale home has already been mentioned. Typically a home-loving father, he delighted in doing simple little tasks of repair around the house and at one time carved an immense Grandfather's clock with a most delicate design. His completed work stood some five or six feet high.

Photography had interested him from his early days, and some of his earliest photographs still exist. In the days when the old Windmill stood in Lawrence he told a pupil how to make the best picture of this spot; it should include a small tree to the left of the picture. William A. Griffith was head of the department of drawing and painting in 1899 and soon formed a close friendship with Preyer. Both were very busy men devoted to their work, but both found time to share photography as a hobby.

Preyer was a proficient chess player and card player, bringing to these games the same penetrating analysis that was evident in his teaching and composing. His presence at card parties was certain to enliven the occasion by his inimitable quiet humor. Wit and humor were among the ineffable qualities of appeal about his whole personality. Yet the humor was so personal and usually so delicate—almost evanescent—that it must remain as a precious memory to those who experienced it and be lost to others through inability to preserve it on the printed page. The reader is referred to the third chapter for a description of a musical joke which developed through his association with a group of close friends who frequently met at his home on Saturday evenings.

Credit for some of Preyer's self-development goes to his reading of musical and non-musical books. In his later years it was not uncommon for him to read five full-length detective stories weekly. He did not say much about this pastime because he felt it was rather improper for a university professor. But it was typical of a great mind, and many famous people have had an interest in detective novels because of their innate urge to penetrate every aspect of life, to be sensitive to every detail about them which could contribute to the development of the art or work they loved.



Intense love of nature and life made him seek the beauties of Colorado summers for many years, both early in his life in Kansas when he made concert appearances in Colorado and during the last years of his life when he devoted his summers to composing in his cabin in Green Mountain Falls. He enjoyed picnics with his family and friends from adjoining cabins, and these frequently included his visiting students. This outpouring of his love for humanity also explains his excellence as a host. In his home any visit was almost certain to be ended by a cup of coffee and refreshments. But it took its toll in his last years because he would not refuse any worthy student who was persistent enough in his efforts to be accepted.

Throughout his lifetime, Carl Preyer joined a number of organizations. The Fortnightly Club was one of these and included several faculty members and a number of prominent business and professional men of Lawrence. As a member of these organizations he showed the same sense of responsibility that was manifested in his everyday contacts; he was a stabilizing force through his careful avoidance of political and religious discussions.

Class students in harmony or counterpoint or composition enjoyed the advantage of almost personal instruction from him. He would frequently very painstakingly go over a student's work pointing out errors and opportunities for improvement in such an impressive manner that the error would never be forgotten. Then again, he would illustrate the day's lesson in harmony or counterpoint at the piano improvising in such refreshing fashion that his students sat in awe—literally, as one pupil has put it, "with their mouths open." His thorough knowledge of the theoretical subjects of music enabled him to produce immediate examples from the world's literature of music for various rules, or, if the particular example were not at hand, to produce one on a moment's notice.

Seemingly never tiring of hard work, he would spend hours at the keyboard writing and practicing far into the night after a strenuous full day's teaching schedule "on the hill." He constantly kept up his own technique and repertoire and expanded it to include worthy new compositions. When he was not doing this, he was busy with composing. His knowledge of piano literature was so accurate and vast that, in later years when his sight was failing enough to discourage close examination of musical scores, he could correct a pupil by statements such as: "You played a G sharp instead of G natural in the bass on page four, the third stave down."

Preyer's gift for classical improvisation, an endowment which is given to very few musicians, furnished a welcome relief to members of the

K. U. piano faculty during a lull in the piano examinations. He would start a theme which would be taken up by Dean Swarthout, and between the two there would result some marvelous improvisations at two pianos. Preyer could also be depended upon to bring a sack of apples or something else appetizing for the piano faculty to enjoy while taking intermission during these examinations.

Improvisation of the harmony lesson for the day or of other theoretical exercises by Preyer has already been noted. A source of great enjoyment and inspiration to his piano pupils was his habit of improvising another melodic or contrapuntal line or a variation at his second piano while the pupil played the original composition on the first piano. These second parts were quite fresh and original and did much to enrich and invigorate the student's own playing. As one former student said: "I believe that was one of the chief things that uplifted me and put new life into my own playing."

Preyer's bowing in concert appearance has been so aptly described by a former associate and a former pupil that their statements bear quotation: "His bow was the most convincing example of shyness that I have ever seen in anyone—young or old." "It was easier for him to play an encore than to make a bow before the audience."

Preyer's delight in reading over music away from the piano has already been touched upon. One time he told a pupil: "I can take a piece of music, and sit down in my easy chair with it, and get just as much enjoyment out of reading it through as if I played it on the piano." To him that seemed commonplace or self-evident.

Preyer enjoyed teasing friends and pupils but always in a congenial, unmalicious manner. One day a pupil, who was an exceedingly nervous person with unusual ability, was taking a lesson. Preyer paced up and down the studio as she, becoming more nervous, played faster and faster. Suddenly she stopped playing and snapped at him: "How do you think I can play while you are pacing up and down like that?" He answered: "How do you think I can sit still when there's a cyclone after me?"

\* \* \*

If the present writer may be pardoned personal recollections, he would like to mention a few of the traits of the composer, teacher, and pianist, as he noted them, adapting certain material from the announcement of Preyer's death that appeared in the *University of Kansas Graduate Magazine* in December, 1947.

"Papa Preyer," as he was affectionately called by his friends and pupils, was not obvious, never superficial, or transparent. He was

characterized by traits which had to be studied, learned, mastered and, often enough, re-studied, re-learned, and re-mastered. He was profound, stately, tender, and kind. A quiet modest man, devoid of personal thrust, he was contented and interested in his music for its own sake. He was, therefore, rarely chosen for preferment.

The first impressive trait was his amazing youthfulness. Not until his last months did he fully acquire any of the complexion of old age, the frailties of the flesh, the encumbrances of disease. Even then, he retained a smile which, though faint, was of such gentleness, warmth, and understanding that I have never forgotten it. We often talked about "modern music" and about the evolution of music. We agreed that the actual physical nature of the auditory apparatus remained constant from generation to generation and that emotional and psychological needs brought about the changes in musical style, but that these needs were not being satisfactorily met by the cacophonous nature of many modern compositions. He accepted the new and different in music very tolerantly, although he did insist upon melody as being of prime importance. He had no inclination to choose between composers. He admired beauty wherever he found it, whatever its source, without prejudice.

The second feature of this remarkable being was a pair of prominent eyes which shone with an absolute joy of living, and in spite of all their outer precision, conveyed an inner state of an artist's world of dreams. These eyes would light up with the most extraordinary expression, always dominated by joviality, kindness, and a kind of gnomish appreciation of life. Love of life! No man has felt it more deeply or clung to it more tenaciously.

A third characteristic was his devotion to teaching which covered the greater part of his life. His contributions in this field will be developed to a limited extent in the next chapter.

Professor Preyer had yet another distinction—his own music. His compositions have everything great music must have: style, understanding, the grand manner, and the humble heart. As previously noted, they contain the true distinction of idea, craftsmanship, positive individuality, depth of philosophy, and imaginative flight which are found only in great music. Particularly are they marked by that rarest of musical gifts, a true melodic sense. Further search for the real essence of Preyer, the composer, will be made in the third chapter.

Sergei Koussevitsky has said: "The supreme goal of the composer is to conquer time—to be in the past, in the present and the future, to convey the infinity of thought, emotion, and the ideal, symbolizing eternity." The genius of Carl A. Preyer enabled him to surpass this goal

by combining the counterpoint of tradition (often modified by modern implications) with the poetics of the romantic days, the display of the virtuoso days (but never for its own sake), and the lyricism and colorful expression of this century. A few other qualities should be re-emphasized: ever-present freshness of inspiration, modernity without atonality or other bizarre unaesthetic attributes, youthfulness and vitality combined with mature judgment, balance and proportion yet with plasticity and richness, sentiment without sentimentality, and—most important of all—an inexhaustible beauty allowing his music to give all it possesses, yet to retain all that it has given.

# The Teacher

*Patience is the passion of great hearts.*—James Russell Lowell.  
*Music training is more potent than any other instrumentality, for it finds its way into the inmost places of the soul, on which it mightily fastens.*—Plato.

It is very difficult to write about Preyer the teacher. One of the reasons is that he belonged to the category of unobtrusive pedagogues. The propounder of no dogmas or standard "school" of principles, he would make short pregnant comments vivid enough to stir the thoughtful student and illuminate a particular problem.

Preyer had the traits and the skills of a superbly successful teacher: he was clear-minded, orderly, painstakingly exact, and acutely sensitive to causes of technical and subsequent emotional insecurity. This last trait allowed him to compliment a student only on rare occasions, praise being limited to the very best work. He supplemented his great natural gifts with a studiousness, a devotion to truth, an expenditure of energy in his teachings, that made his lessons and his analyses of the complicated facts of his specialty live as dramatic realities in the minds of his students. The suppressed enthusiasm, the elevated tone, the sense of responsibility, the tenderness and delicacy—all of which he conveyed so eloquently by word and manner—made his students understand how much he himself valued the lessons which he tried to teach, and feel the implications that his manner and conduct conveyed. His teaching was of such quality that his pupils could readily accept college faculty positions.

On one occasion in February, 1944, the present writer spoke of a certain pianist as having a harsh tone and suggested that this must be some reflection of the pianist's own personality. Whereupon Preyer remarked: "You're right. After a person has finished studying with teachers and has worked alone for a number of years, his own personality finally becomes infused in his piano tone and playing." Without realizing it, he had given the clue to his own artistry; the beauty of his life and character gave his own piano tone an almost celestial quality so haunting that all who ever heard him can never forget it.

Preyer's technique of criticism and his keen analysis of a problem were extraordinarily stimulating. The author can recall no single occasion (and there were many) when he had a particular problem in tone, dynamics, rhythm, or interpretation that Professor Preyer did not immediately explain why he was having the specific difficulty and suggest

measures for correction. This was the experience of all his students. His constant suggestion to ascertain the cause of a particular difficulty led his students to be more independent of their teacher than they would have been otherwise.

The sincerity and directness of his speaking, his courage in challenging errors, his keen remarks or pertinent anecdotes, his wit and humor left indelible imprints on the minds of his students. The author would like to record a few of the more characteristic comments. The following are quotations from talks with Preyer or from an article he wrote for the April, 1918, issue of *The Musical Bulletin* of the Kansas City Musical Club.

"Technique is largely mental; that is, having the right notes in mind. If one has a clear mental picture of what he wants to play the hand will easily play the correct notes."

In answer to a question about tempo rubato: "Some interesting parts of a composition need emphasis, hence they must be played at a tempo suitable to impress the listener. The idea of keeping the left hand in tempo and varying the tempo of the right hand is stupid. The important parts of a composition need emphasis while less important parts may be speeded over. This explains why many concert pianists play passage work much faster than the tempo marking. Above all, taste must determine where and the amount of tempo rubato used."

"The beginning and ending of a composition deserve special care and study. One can play well pages of passage work in the middle of a composition but the audience will forget this if the beginning or ending was poorly played."

"Show me something of Chopin's that isn't difficult. . . . The more you study a work of Chopin the harder it gets."

Preyer tried to impart to each student a manner of playing that adequately combined an intimate knowledge of the composer's meaning and individuality of style with a mastery of the technical means to carry the message of the music in an unfailing manner to the listeners. Various statements, such as "Notice how Chopin usually begins his codas on the IV chord" served as the impetus for the student's own analysis of individuality of style.

It is not the purpose to develop here a complete concept of Preyer's approach to the technical aspects of piano performance. He felt certain basic principles were agreed upon by all. However, a few of the more salient features must be included because they partially represent Preyer's contribution to piano technique, a contribution which will be preserved through his hundreds of students.

In the aforementioned article in *The Musical Bulletin* of the Kansas City Musical Club, he gave some of his ideas on "Technic, the basis for interpretative playing." He wrote: "A big gap exists between the grasping of a composer's idea and the clear and free presentation of the same. Bridging this over is accomplished almost entirely by one's technical equipment, for without the assurance that this alone gives, even musical feeling and insight cannot have free play."

Having a personal interest in the physiological mechanics of piano playing, the present writer talked to Preyer on several occasions about relaxation and ease in playing. Relaxation is promoted by realizing that once the hammer has struck the piano wire no further change in the tone is possible and that pressure on the key in excess of the amount required to keep the key depressed and various rotary and other peculiar motions are useless and do nothing but contribute to stiffness of the hand and arm and general fatigue.

Preyer felt relaxation should begin with good support being given the muscles of the back. He once asked the present writer to confirm that these muscles are among the strongest and largest in the body and hence have the most inherent power. It was agreed that by using them one can relax the shoulder girdle, arm, and wrist muscles.

The typical gnomish smile would be brought to his face by the mention of those who profess that the piano can be played with complete relaxation. "Of course it takes work. It takes force to depress the key and raise the hammer at the other end of the fulcrum." To do this work, "tension must exist wherever effort is made." By this, he meant a feeling of just the exact amount of muscular tension in the fingers and forearm muscles—not mental tension, but a feeling of anticipation, so to speak. "A weak use of the muscles in action produces a flabby, indistinct tone which is unfortunately all too common. The problem then is to work for independence between the two conditions that is, a complete relaxation of the opposing muscles together with strength in those needed to produce tone."

Preyer felt very definitely that continued efforts to develop muscular strength must be made since "both finger strength and weight strength are essential to a rational piano technique." The finger joints should be firm, "like steel, yet retaining an extreme sensitiveness and capable of every gradation of tone and touch." The subject of tone and touch was frequently analyzed in lessons. At one time when making a study of the physical basis of piano tone, the present writer read a statement that there was only one way to produce piano tone, that it made no difference whether a finger or a block of wood contacted the key, the

tone was only the product of a requisite amount of force applied to the key, throwing the hammer against the wire. For a while he tried to defend these statements as scientific fact but soon realized through talking to Preyer that they were made by men insensitive to the more delicate evanescent qualities of piano music. There was something more in the differences of tone production and projection between Paderewski and Rachmaninoff, or Hofmann and Rubinstein, for examples, than just their gradation of tone in the melodic line as contrasted with gradation of tone in the accompaniment. Development of individual tone which always had to be of good quality, was one of the great heritages passed on to pupils.

Certain definite points were stated by Preyer as aids to the development of a pleasing piano tone. "In working for a good tone it is useful to deliberately slow the finger descent to the key. . . . One never obtains a bad tone when playing with all his force if he starts with the finger tips on the keys and allows the slightest bit of 'give' in the wrist. . . . It is very good to have a fine tone at the beginning of a phrase since it gives one a good start. One usually has a little time to cover the new phrase before starting it. By 'covering' one can produce good tone quality. . . . Whenever one wants to soften a tremolo, trill, or any other similar type of passage, gradually raising the wrist while playing will force him to soften the tone. . . . Bad tone results from too stiff wrists and/or fingers plus too fast a key descent so the tone is not exactly known and is not definitely controlled. . . . A loud tone can be obtained by two methods: as fast a key descent as possible or the entire arm striking the key with the key not descending as fast as possible, the latter way always producing a nice, full, round tone.

"It must be remembered that within limits the more slowly the key is depressed, the more beautiful the quality of tone. It is to this principle of slow key depression that the various methods of producing melody-touch may be traced. Among these are pressure touches, the up-and-down motion of the wrist and the one made by the rotary motion of the forearm.

"For passage work the tone must be produced by a quick depression of the key, for the swifter the movement the more brilliant the effect. It is true that this swift movement makes the tone harder, but the ear does not have time to detect it in rapid playing and only catches the effect of sparkling brilliance. The so-called staccato touch is not a separate touch at all, as the term relates merely to duration of tone and the quick release of the key."

Preyer was not enthusiastic about the *leggiero* touch because "it is



very uncertain in the best of hands and is of doubtful value to the pianist because of its lack of absolute control of tone." Careful listening to nearly all present-day pianists of distinction will reveal the truth of this statement. When the composer indicated a passage in his own works to be played *leggero*, he usually meant the nearest approach to that touch—*non-legato*—a term appearing in his works with some frequency. He felt that to think of a *leggero* touch as light *staccato* was a mistake, since "if anything requires a stiff finger it is a *staccato* note and very fast *staccato* notes are almost impossible." His suggestion for *staccato* playing is very helpful: "Strike the key and immediately release it by releasing finger; movement of the hand up and down is unnecessary and really makes a longer *staccato* note."

Above all, Preyer emphasized that the acquirement of a good technique is largely a matter of concentration, "a mental feat rather than a physical one, for the student must think each thing before doing it, and then do it with all his will, to the exclusion of everything else." Throughout all his teaching Preyer emphasized that technique in its essence should be *musical*, whether practiced by itself alone, or through the vehicle of studies and more pretentious compositions. It was his frequent comment that advanced students might obtain nearly all their technique from the difficult passages contained in the world's greatest piano literature and "why not work on these passages, since, when you have mastered them, you have something to play?"

A few other striking statements concerning phases of piano technique may be enumerated in alphabetical order since, by their very brevity and pointedness, they indicate some of the essential greatness of Preyer as a teacher. The sentences are almost entirely in his own words. Quotation marks have been restricted to the most characteristic comments. It should be remembered that these ideas were intended for college students with previous piano study.

**Accuracy:** It is better to make a retard and play the correct notes than to play wrong notes in the correct tempo.

**Arpeggi:** Play arpeggi close to the keys, keeping first knuckle joint high and rest of hand tilted in the direction the arpeggio is progressing. Use gliding motion on the skips in the arpeggio. Let the finger that has just played release the key half way, but still hold the tone, while the thumb passes under or the hand passes over. At the top of an arpeggio the palm of the hand gradually turns outward to aid in playing the arpeggio while descending; at the bottom of an arpeggio the opposite motion is used. . . . When first practicing arpeggi, play slowly and evenly with no accent on thumb. . . . Practice crossing under of thumb,

trying to hold the remaining two keys half depressed. . . . Sometimes play arpeggi through two octaves accenting only bottom and top notes, playing fast and forte. . . . In playing arpeggi think of each note before playing. Then think of the next note. Do not think of a whole group because this makes the hand position too difficult. (These last statements apply to early study of arpeggi before the concept of the entire arpeggio as one thought process is developed.) . . . Remember that pressure or holding the key clear down to the key bed wastes energy in endeavoring to keep the damper off the string.

**Alternating passages:** Be certain that the left hand is raised as high as the right or the left hand will fade out when the passage is played up to tempo. Work the passage through by three methods: accenting the left hand, accenting the right hand, playing both hands together as solid chords. Finally, practice the passage as written.

**Chord playing:** Fingers and hand must be set in chord playing to ensure all notes being even in quality. For repeated chords use the entire arm to give strength in building the climax. In fast-repeated chords play with as high a wrist as possible. When bravura chords must be played with hands skipping to either end of the keyboard watch the right hand; it is surprising how well the left hand will hit the correct bass note.

**Climaxes:** For big climaxes use stiffened fingers, wrist, and whole arm and do not allow any joints to give.

**Daily Exercises:** For daily technical practice, start with an exercise for the fourth and fifth fingers. Play it until it is felt the fourth and fifth fingers cannot be raised any more, then go on to the next exercise. Follow this by a five-finger exercise, then an expansion-contraction exercise, followed by a scale, an arpeggio, and an octave exercise. Then the technically difficult passages in one's present repertoire.

**Difficult Passages:** In working out passages which present several difficulties be certain to work out one difficulty at a time. Always approach the difficult passage feeling at ease in the fingers, hands, arms, and shoulders. . . . Many difficult passages are made easier by a high wrist. . . . Don't allow the listener to know that a passage is difficult or easy by markedly changing tempo. One must learn "timing," that is, slowing gradually for difficult passages so the average listener is unaware of the tempo change. Remember speed is of no value when the playing is not clear or the speed is so great the ear and mind cannot grasp the passage. . . . When a passage is persistently hard, one must be thinking the passage incorrectly. Try to divide the passage harmonically. If the tempo is fast, combine several chords; if slow, don't combine too many chords. . . . Many difficult passages are troublesome because one does not accent

properly or strong enough. . . . Life is too short to struggle with pieces in which one cannot get past the technical stage.

**Double-note Passages:** In playing double-note passages make at least one of the voices legato in each set of double-notes and let the other voice glide. . . . In any double-note passage, do not try to play legato if the tempo is fast. Attempting to do so only stiffens the hand and does not produce a legato or improve the effect.

**Ease in Playing:** Make things as easy as possible and still obtain the desired results. . . . Always play at a comfortable speed. . . . One tightens up because he fears what is coming. Just think: "Now, this is simple. Why worry? I can play it". . . . If one has to stiffen part of the hand and fingers, it is better to stiffen one-half of the hand rather than the whole hand.

**Glissandos:** In playing a glissando, be sure to accent the first and last notes, giving the exact range of the glissando. One trick is to accent strongly the first note, taking the pedal with it, and then start the rest of the glissando softly, crescendoing up and accenting the last note. . . . Always take time in playing a glissando.

**Lateral movements:** Lateral movements require no particular energy; they should be very free. . . . Make quick lateral movements instead of arcs. This will get the hand much sooner into position to play.

**Left hand:** Make the left hand "assertive." The right hand can't do anything unless the left hand furnishes a basis on which to work. Because one thinks the left hand is less important than the right, he neglects to develop it. Then a difficult passage in the left hand is speedily played to get it over with and as a result the tempo suffers. . . . In so many passages the left hand must keep time. . . . When crossing left hand over the right to play a note, use the third finger on black keys and the second finger on white keys. . . . Keep after the left hand, maintaining high knuckles.

**Memorizing:** The idea of being able to start in the middle of a phrase or measure any place in a composition is faulty because many phrases call to mind the subsequent phrase. . . . If one is playing from memory a passage which goes well without thinking about it—that is automatically—don't try to concentrate on it. Of course, one must have a very thorough knowledge of the composition anyway so that if the automatic thinking process breaks down he will know exactly what to play next. . . . In memorizing learn both hands separately (if necessary), then put them together. This is not always necessary and is governed by the type of passage involved. The speed of memorizing will vary with the amount of affinity between the player and the music. . . .

In working out and memorizing an extremely difficult measure play it with one measure before and one after it; then with two measures before and two measures after it, etc. . . . In memorizing difficult passages think them through as though you had to compose them. . . . Three specific helps in memorizing: 1. Let the end of one phrase suggest the next. 2. Learn phrase by phrase. 3. Compare one phrase with another similar to it. Ask yourself why the composer made the changes he did. In this way one both analyzes the work and helps himself memorize it.

**Octaves:** In playing octaves follow the thumb with the eye. "The little finger ought to take care of itself." . . . The hand is tightened only as much as is necessary; the forearm is not tightened; the wrist is loose. . . . The hand has the feeling of waving good-bye when playing octaves.

**Pedalling:** Specific instructions on how to pedal: 1. The only movement involved is pressing down. This makes one movement instead of two. 2. Let pedal spring raise foot instead of deliberately raising foot. 3. Pedal smoothly but quickly. Give dampers time to really dampen. . . . "I believe pedalling is fifty percent of piano playing."

**Recitals:** To prepare for playing in public, one cannot be sure he knows compositions unless he practices them very slowly without the score and with very little expression. One must think each note and finger action exactly and compel himself to practice very slowly and firmly. If this playing of a composition is accurate, and one knows at every moment what he is going to do next, he really knows the work. This practicing should be confined to eight measures or even a phrase if necessary. . . . In preparing to play in public set a metronome at a slow pace and keep going over the piece mechanically, emphasizing rapid finger movements but slow playing. Finger and hand positions must become automatic.

Specific suggestions for preparing for public performance: 1. "It's quite a trick to convince yourself that the day of a program is no different than any other day." 2. Start slowly and slow down a trifle for difficult passages where speed means nothing. 3. Practice beginnings and endings of works very carefully. 4. Practice difficult passages slowly the day of their performance. 5. Concentrate very strongly while playing in order to forget the presence of an audience. 6. It is a great assurance to know one has done a passage well many times so he need not worry about playing it in public. 7. Don't try to get more tone than the particular piano will give. This helps to prevent unmusical tone, inaccuracies, and fatigue. 8. Practice everything very slowly striking each note with precision. Once in a while one should test oneself at tempo speed.

**Repeated notes:** When the second of two repeated notes does not sound it means that the finger playing the first note was not raised quickly enough.

**Rhythm:** Nothing marks the amateur as much as playing a sixteenth note after a dotted eighth as if it were the third note in a triplet. . . . Don't make the amateurish mistake of playing a triplet like a mordent—the triplet notes should be evenly divided. . . . Difficulties in rhythm usually occur when notes are held over and there is no steady rhythm-marking voice. . . . Watch the rhythm very carefully when an easy part follows a difficult one. The easy passage is apt to be taken too fast. . . . Notice how much easier playing two against three is, if one hand has octaves. . . . When confronted by a rhythmic problem always count in sixteenth notes—this breaks the problem into its smallest parts. Also be sure that one hand keeps marking the time accurately. . . . In difficult rhythmic passages one must "cold-heartedly" (*i.e.*, methodically) practice, using the metronome. Begin very slowly and be sure the time and notes are correct, then gradually increase to speed. This is the only way one will ever master rhythm. . . . It is better to make the short note following a dotted note too short than too long (which makes a triplet). Making it too short emphasizes the rhythmic idea desired by the composer. . . . When the right hand plays a melody accented on the offbeat, one must feel the real accent and play it in the left hand.

**Scales:** No wrist movement should be used in playing scales. When the thumb passes under, make lateral movement of the whole arm. Thumb is placed in position while second finger is being played. Keep the outer side of the hand at an approximate 45° angle to the keyboard in scale playing. Use only the amount of energy required to depress key; then use only enough energy to leave key depressed. Raise wrist when passing hand over thumb. In starting scale play the note groups of three and four together to get proper finger position. . . . Practice chromatic scale with fingering of 1-2-3-4-5 in repetition for developing evenness of finger action. . . . In scale passages where the thumb is passed under the fifth finger, just glide the hand and do not try too hard to pass the thumb under the hand. Feel very free and do not stiffen hand or arm. Tensing the fingers alone will make the passage clear enough. . . . Increase scale speed by feeling very free about playing it. . . . A method for developing speed and virtuosity in scale playing consists of: 1. Playing clusters of tones in the scale and then thinking the whole group together when playing. 2. Practicing all scales from different degrees of the scale. 3. Being sure that the elbow is turned out from the midline of the body in order to facilitate the passing under of the thumb.

**Skips:** After one makes a skip he should not play the note following immediately. He should take a split second to make the tone of good quality. . . . Continue to cultivate fast lateral movements to allow plenty of time before playing the note skipped to. Be certain fast lateral movements are very free, effortless, and relaxed. . . . Before skipping to a chord have a very clear idea of the moulding and setting of the hand for the chord. . . One should hardly see the fingers move—just the hand to each new position. Practicing with high finger strokes is detrimental to speed in skipping. . . . In passages where the hands leap in opposite directions to distant notes, watch the right hand. One's left hand is usually more dependable in skips than his right. . . . It is a great help to play skips to black keys with a flattened finger and side-glancing motion. This gives one the advantage of covering space with accuracy.

**Speed:** Speed in playing is ineffective in two instances: 1. Where clarity is lost due to failure of "tapping" each note so it is distinct. 2. Where a modulation or other distinctive idea is run through so fast the ear and mind cannot grasp it. . . . If one has trouble in a fast passage, he should play it very slowly and analyze his technical mistake that makes the fast playing difficult or inaccurate. . . . If one thinks he is playing too fast, he should accent strongly, since there is nothing like strong accenting to hold one back. . . . Always get hand in position to play a note as soon as possible.

**Thumb:** It is very difficult to play the thumb as a finger. The thumb in fundamental position should go out at about a 30° angle to the radius and should be a straight line out to the last finger joint, which should be bent in, so the last phalanx is parallel to the radius. . . . Constantly watch thumb position. Most of the time it should be parallel to the other fingers. . . . One must train his thumb to play with finger movement only, no wrist movement. . . . Practice raising wrist while depressing thumb. If one lowers wrist in playing with thumb, especially in passage work, it gets his hand out of shape and slows him up. Besides this, it may make the passage blurred.

**Trills:** In a plain isolated trill, always trill from upper neighbor of note indicated. This creates a dissonance on the strong beats which makes a beautiful effect. . . . In playing trills in thirds, the outside of the hand should be very loose. . . . Trilling from above is probably best in most cases, since the beginning note makes a dissonance and, in addition, no extra note is required at the end of the trill. In all cases, whatever sounds best is what should be done. . . . There are two ways to have the lower note of a trill prominent, if it is a melody note: trill from that note and have a triplet or turn at the end or hold the first note for twice its

time value. . . . Unevenness in playing trills results from not raising each finger the same height from the keys and/or not using the same amount of force in each finger. Keeping the wrist high will overcome the tendency to raise the fingers very high or uneven distances.

**Turns:** Always play turns from the upper neighbor. The last two notes are even in time value.

\* \* \*

Being a fine pianist, with his background of European training, Carl Preyer could easily have devoted his entire life to the concert platform. Some of his more important appearances have been mentioned. While it might be said he chose to teach, it would be nearer the truth to say he *had* to teach, because he belonged to that rare group of teachers who love teaching. He enjoyed teaching, because of its human appeal and human interest, because teaching springs from an inner desire to give more and more to others. He loved his art with a passionate and exclusive ardor, and for this reason he loved also the pupil who was to become the depository of this art which he revered above all else. This is why he knew instinctively how to touch the hearts of his pupils and attach them to himself once and for all; this is why he continued to teach for nearly a decade after official retirement from the University.





# The Composer

*Genius does nothing without a reason. Every artist of genius breathes into his work an unexpressed idea which speaks to our feelings even before it can be defined.*—Frank Liszt.

*Artistic greatness is both more permanent and universal than historical greatness.*—Alfred Einstein.

A chapter of this size can make no pretension of having dealt fully with the expansion of harmonic possibilities seen in this Kansas composer's output; but a few simple indications may serve to aid those who are attracted by the composer's idiomatic style of writing. Preyer's innovations are, after all, only the logical development of his already explored resources.

That Preyer was a man of a rarely sensitive temperament is apparent in every measure he wrote. Study of the influences under which he seems to have written and of the methods employed to express his highly individual personality in terms of music will do something to explain the peculiar quality of his works. If this section is a help to such a study, it will have achieved its object, which is not to tell the listener or player what to think, but to give him some material for forming his own conclusions. It will describe and draw attention to various features of Preyer's style by referring particularly to such measures as best exemplify them.

His works for pianoforte (published and unpublished) are as high in quality as they are diversified, a body of music so large and so varied that its arrangement into categories for analysis and study presents a complex problem. It is not entirely practical or desirable to survey the whole output from beginning to end in strict chronological order. Preyer very rightly judged that many of his early works should be of little value for posterity. Consequently, the works which are selected for brief analysis are among those which achieved the greatest favor or those which are still readily available as published works. It is felt that the following, more than any other compositions, illustrate and delimit what one might call the "Preyer idiom":

## SONGS:

*The Lord's Prayer*

*The Lord Is My Shepherd*

## PIANO WORKS:

*To My Dear Daughters*

*Palisades*

*Etude in F# Minor*

*Sonata, No. IV*

## ***The Lord's Prayer***

(Published 1926 Theodore Presser Co.)

Preyer's religious feeling were deep, but expressed with restraint. He believed in the fundamental good of nature and of man. It is for this every reason that his religious songs make so moving an appeal. *The Lord's Prayer* shows in its introductory phrase the composer's frequent device of using two melodies in contrary motion. Instead of ending directly on a Db in the first chord of the second measure, he uses its upper neighbor.

Such evasion of the obvious melodic progression is one of the essentials of Preyer's works, whether for voice or for piano. Numerous examples of this may be found, in each instance suggesting that the listener would know that the obvious melodic progression would be trite and that the composer had an adeptness in melodic writing and a particular fondness for an ingratiating way of approaching his principal note.

In the first measure of the third stave a beautiful suspended altered minor chord is used. Later, particular emphasis is placed on the word *will* of *Thy will be done* by a minor seventh skip to a high Gb.

By the effective use of melodic sequences, counter-melodies in the accompaniment, along with increasing movement, the song's climax is built, starting with *For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory*. And what potency the word *forever* has when the accompaniment is built on a dominant ninth embellishment chord on II of the key! As if lit by an unearthly light, his music glows with a spirit that lifts both it and the hearer far above this world, so that one seems to be approaching the realms of that peace and happiness which are always just out of reach for so many, and which it is granted to few to hand on the torch to lead us there.

When this song appeared in the *Etude* for September, 1938, the editor wrote: "We have reviewed scores of settings of *The Lord's Prayer* but know none more beautiful than this reverent and masterly setting by Dr. Carl A. Preyer . . . one of the most loved and revered musicians in the middle west. . . ."

## ***The Lord Is My Shepherd***

(Published 1950, Edward Schuberth & Co., Inc.)

The setting of the Twenty-Third Psalm (composed in 1944) must remain as the greatest expression of Preyer's religious feeling, a feeling which transcended formal expression of religious dogma and revealed itself in every act of his daily life, a feeling which recaptured something of the faith and piety of the medieval spirit. A very haunting and

Oriental flavor is given the main theme by the use of chords of the added major and minor second.

Following *He maketh me*, the echo of a voice phrase occurs in the accompaniment, a pattern not carried to excess (as some composers do) but used in certain select places. The descriptive quality of the vocal line and accompaniment of *to lie down in green, green pastures* is only fully revealed to those who hear it.

The gentlest rippling of triplets in the accompaniment to the word *water* with the I chord of Cb minor adds interest.

The peaceful calm of the chordal progression underlying the words *the shadow of death* seems almost to have presaged the composer's own end.

Whether composing music for religious tribute or for pianists or his own friends, Preyer had always in mind the goal of personal expression. This very intensity, this very desire to utilize and develop to the fullest the technical and intellectual resources of his own time in the search for an ever finer communication of his innermost thoughts to those around him: this is what links certain Preyer songs, religious and secular, to the true art songs of all eras.

### ***To My Dear Daughters***

(Unpublished Manuscript, Illustration IX)

During one of the last years of his life, Carl Preyer received some birthday presents from a group of close musical faculty friends. As a thank-you note he composed *To My Dear Daughters*, a brief flash of musical wit which deserves full quotation because it exemplifies several aspects of his composing art.

The composer's "Great excitement on opening the package" is expressed by an unusual chordal progression. One feels how a person carefully starts to open a gift, then, as his excitement over the contents mounts, the general movement of the improvisation increases. Comparing the melody in the bass of the third measure of the second stave with the first measure of the third stave shows another characteristic. In the second phase, the "left hose" shows more interest than "the right" hose phrase by increased movement upward to a note higher (A) than the previous note (F#). The little *piece de resistance* then begins an allusion to Chopin's *Raindrop Prelude* at the point marked "a la Chopin." In this brief passage a vocal note of appreciation is added. One additional characteristic should be noted, the use of chords spread beyond an octave as in the last three measures of the fourth stave. This improvisation is a little gem giving one a clear insight into the composer's personality.

# To my dear daughters

first excitement on opening the package

The breakfast and the night,

the left hand

Many thanks for the lovely presents

*molto rit.*

*C. a tempo*

*a la Chopin*

With love from

Papa P. P. P.

## ***Palisades***

(Published 1946 Edward Schuberth & Co., Inc.)

The *Palisades*, the first of two *Hudson River Sketches*, is intensely poetic in its musical content and piano style and is as enchanting to players as it is delightful to listeners. It is an expression of true originality and depth of feeling, containing an outpouring of feelings so warmly intense, expressed in music so pianistic, as to be among the most satisfying to play of all the composer's piano works.

The first measure reveals how the composer had revised the prevalent idea that only the tonic triad can represent the tonic feeling, although earlier examples in Preyer's works can be found. The added note (in this example the sixth) brings a suggestion of two harmonies at the same time, resulting in a slight ambiguity. Preyer was fond of doing this, especially in the endings of compositions. His paramount reason for these added notes was usually the desire for a very dissonant effect (as in the ending of the *Spuyten Duyvil Toccata*).

One of the finest examples of the use of chords in parallel motion in all Preyer occurs in the last measure of page four and the first three staves of page five.

When the main theme re-appears it is embellished. This practice is almost universal in Preyer's works. Either the melody is altered by means of employing a single note where a previous chord exists, by changing the melody to a different keyboard register, or by increasing the motion in the accompaniment. A study of these devices offers an absorbing pastime to any musician.

The composer's own words aid in solving the memorizing problem associated with this habit of his: "Always think a passage as though you had to write it. Decide why the composer wrote it that way. Compare it with a similar passage and decide why the composer made the changes he did." In most instances, Preyer made the change to heighten the pianistic effect, to build a climax, to enrich the harmonic or contrapuntal fabric.

The cadenza in the *Palisades* was purposely omitted from the published work by the composer, presumably in deference to its difficulty. It is included here (Illustration X) because it represents, at least to the author, the most effective passage in the entire work and shows some of the characteristic traits of the master. Passages in interlocking octaves or chords are often used by Preyer, and usually they are the more striking passages in the work where they occur. Analysis of this passage reveals Preyer's characteristic of embellishing around the principal notes (in this case an arpeggio on B, D, F#) by the use of upper and lower neighbors.

# Cadenza

veloce molto cresc. sempre 8

ff

(Both hands octave higher than written)

Repeat ad lib

quasi-trillo

loco

f

largo largamente

The ending of the cadenza consists of a trill on three notes altered in an original way rather than adhering strictly to the form of a trill. Instances of trills using several-voiced chords are frequent in Preyer, especially in his later works.

The composer desired the trill in this work to be continued as long as the performer could comfortably do so, building to a triple *forte* of volume in the middle of the trill in order to make the complete fading out of the passage at its end most effective. The trill should be played with the pedal held down throughout and the final triad on B held with keys pressed down. By very slowly lifting the pedal, after the sympathetic vibrations of the piano wires have died away, the final triad floats through in a most ethereal way. This interpretation was the one desired by the composer, and the difficulty in communicating its method of production probably influenced him to omit the cadenza from the published score. Pianists are urged to insert this passage in their interpretation. The long pause following the cadenza is the most moving silence in all Preyer.

### ***Etude in F# Minor***

(Published 1948 Edward Schuberth & Co., Inc.)

This later composition (composed in 1944) is one of the most original and forceful of all Preyer's works. It reminds one of the extraordinary youthfulness and vitality of the man who was eighty-one at the time of its creation. After a brief introductory passage (which taxes the pianist's hand because of its demand for accents on the naturally weaker fingers) a very energetic first theme appears in the tenor voice.

The use of a single bar of 12/8 time is noteworthy. Preyer had for years realized that the most serious obstacle raised by the theorists against the development of musical thought was that of the bar line. Through the years he more and more grouped his notes otherwise than in measures of the same time, the notes taking in his mind an importance relative to their position, *viz.*, those which precede the bar line being unaccented, those which follow the bar line being accented.

Later in this work (page five, second measure), a second theme appears employing parallel fifths in one measure. Consecutive fifths were readily accepted by Preyer because the richness of a full chord or the beauty of a melody or sequence would justify them in his mind. He felt parallel fifths are still forbidden whenever they are the result of awkwardness or lack of skill in writing.

The *Etude* soon becomes very incisive and brilliant. The employment of dominant seventh embellishment chords for color on page six, second stave, is but one of many such uses by Preyer. The first theme, originally

in the tenor voice, re-appears with much greater intensity in the treble. It is enriched by chords using a little figure in their middle voice. This leads to a furious coda which includes a brilliant glissando.

It was only in later years that Preyer employed the glissando. It is always accompanied by some type of chord or interval in the opposite hand and a dissonant effect is always obtained by contrasting the glissando on white keys with the fundamental harmony in a key with several sharps or flats. This is an entirely original use of the glissando and will remain as one of the contributions of Preyer to the literature and technique of the piano.

### *Sonata, No. IV*

(Published 1949, Carl Fischer, Inc.)

Preyer's gifts as a composer for the piano came to their highest fulfillment in his last *Sonata* (composed in 1939). It is of such a serious nature, so profound and idiomatic, architecturally so intricate and harmonically so individual, its sweep so elemental, that it requires the highest powers of interpretation. One's novitiate is likely to be long because it is not merely a question of "learning the piece" but of entering a high place, of gradual initiation through growth in insight. However, the task is infinitely worth while, and the pianist who fails to follow through has missed supreme moments.

A description of this work is insufficient to convey its remarkable range and power. Of these, a fuller realization can be gained only by close study of those many details of its construction which reveal the composer as a master of architectonic planning.

The harmonic texture of the *Sonata* ranges from the simplest to the most elaborate. It is impossible not to admire the spontaneity and naturalness of the musical flow, the absolute clarity in fabric, and the clean and easy handling of large formal problems. That Preyer was a born composer is obvious.

The opening phrase flows directly into being, like the expression of a soaring conception and calls to mind the first line of Shelley's ode *To a Skylark*: "Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!" The composer preferred the main theme to be taken at a rather leisurely tempo in spite of the *Allegro vivace* marking. The opening measures will be found on the cover design. Soon an alternating passage appears with the decisive statements given by the left hand.

Upon the re-statement of the main theme, the interest is heightened by using the theme in octaves. The episode in E flat minor should be played quite a little faster so that the passage work can be more exciting in



accordance with the composer's wish. Preyer's fascination for surprises occasioned by moving into the key of the next note above or below in the scale is evident in the passage which follows. The episode (originally in E flat minor) proceeds in C sharp minor (enharmonically D flat minor but written in C sharp minor for ease in reading). The effect is increased by stating the theme in double thirds.

The episode returns in E flat minor with a borrowed fourth degree of the scale (A $\sharp$ ) forming a common tone for modulation to the key of F major, which rapidly alternates with the parallel minor key.

A parenthetical note should be inserted about Preyer's modulatory methods. His purpose is to connect the two keys through their outward relationships rather than their natural affinities. He is, indeed, as interested in the going to a new key as in the arriving; and, more than that, in getting back again. There are various routes by which he sets out. A note common to two chords is a fruitful one, the note of the first chord assuming a new significance in the second. Frequently he takes an enharmonic chord in one key and lets it become a diatonic one in another key. He specially favors the Neapolitan and the augmented sixth chords, and like other chords he may subject them to enharmonic treatment.

The episode in F major leads to the second theme in the key of B flat (page 7, stave 4). This theme begins with two *dolce* chords, so characteristic of the composer. The first chord is simply the tonic of B flat major; the second is an inverted ninth chord. Words cannot describe the auditory effect of these two chords, which are the reflections of a supremely musical mind. They seem to be a sigh of unworldliness, a breath of romantic fantasy, which are rarely to be found elsewhere in piano literature. Such passages are among the magical things of music.

The second subject is the place Preyer frequently reserves for his finer themes, and this is one of those inspirations which occurred even to Preyer but once in a while. Analyzed in its entirety, the second subject epitomizes several features of his musical style.

One of these is the feeling produced by employing a dominant ninth on I of the key. Placidity is achieved by using the theme over a pedal point. Another is the previously mentioned evasion of obvious melodic progressions by the use of neighboring tones. A third is that of using increased motion in the various parts to expand the feeling of accelerating advance through the passage. A logical modulation leads to a passage in B flat minor which announces the development section.

Preyer's development sections are always notable for their cohesive craftsmanship. The material for this development is largely derived from the original E flat minor episode. Soon the theme in octaves in the

bass is presented against sixths in the treble, and presently the whole idea is greatly invigorated by the use of full chords in the bass. Notice the clever device for slowing the tempo by keeping the accompaniment in the same rhythm (6/8) while the melody is in 3/4 rhythm (page 11, stave 3).

A new theme, bearing an allusion to the second subject, is introduced in the development. The characteristic spreading of a chord beyond the octave is in evidence here (page 12, stave 4). The transition material (page 14, staves 1-5) is derived from previous measures (page 4, staves 4 and 5). With ease and elegance following the development section which leads far into the future, he uses skillful modulations in order to return to his first theme, which already belongs to the past.

In the recapitulation the enunciation section is modified in order to explore more deeply the original thematic ideas. The two previously mentioned *dolce* chords of the second subject are now in E flat major, the composer preferring this key to the more conventional dominant key. This all leads to a coda of great impressiveness, using material from the first subject. Study of the endings of Preyer's compositions provides a source of amazement at his inherent and unfailing sense of what was effective for the conclusion to his flow of music.

The simple outlines of the second movement, marked *Lento*, conceal an inner design of ineffable ingenuity. In three-part form, the movement shows a true melodic sense and worthy sentiment. Comparison of the initial measures of the movement with the re-appearance of the main theme again illustrates Preyer's fondness for varying his main subjects in their re-statement.

By using contrary motion, voices in parallel thirds or sixths, or other devices, Preyer's basses become one of his most powerful means of effect, and he actually makes them act many parts. This movement is one of the more prominent examples.

The melody of the second movement rises to an intense height in its middle section, producing a tension that only dies out after characteristic echoing patterns in various keyboard registers (page 23, stave 4). This is but one of the many instances of Preyer's delight in playful manipulation of his musical materials. Through a noteworthy modulation using a minimum of voices the main theme reappears with increased motion in the accompaniment.

The outward spreading of chords in contrary motion, a trait not uncommon in Preyer, is seen in the last stave of this movement.

The entire second movement gives an impression of unearthly beauty which, though exquisitely designed for the player, owes so little of its

telling effect to pianistic elaboration, but so much to structural restraint.

Preyer combines a sensitive and cultured musical nature with an alert musical mind that often gives off sparks of mordant humor. The third movement demonstrates this. Its scampering humor and lilt are quite inimitable; they are not to be described—cannot be appreciated, except by performance! The composer admitted that the current craze for grotesque rhythmic basses in popular music may have influenced his subject in this movement. But here the idiom is used with such refined restraint that it bears only the faintest resemblance to its more common kin.

The varied harmonic range of the scherzo is one of its delights. There was never any conscious attempt on Preyer's part to write differently from other composers, and yet it is frequently impossible to anticipate what he will do next. That is what makes him so exciting to listen to: for example, the writing of a passage in E minor (a half step higher than expected) immediately followed by a return to the original key of the movement (page 27, stave 2, measures 3-5).

In the middle section of this movement a passage work figuration in broken fifths (page 29, staves 1-3) anticipates similar measures in the fourth movement and helps to achieve unity (page 32, staves 1-3).

This third movement is one of the very rare instances in Preyer where the original first section is repeated without alteration. The composer probably felt that it was necessary in this particular instance because the swiftness of the movement demands its repeating in order to drive the thematic material home to the listener.

The last movement of this *Sonata*, carefully laid out in its structural scheme, has an irresistible pulse and *elan*. It is magnificent music, in its lyric sweep, its fertility of ideas, and its romanticism. It achieves brilliance at all times, but it is the brilliance of the ruby, not of the diamond.

The movement—in reality a tarantella—has an introduction in the dominant key opening with a synthetic scale in octaves on B $\flat$ , C $\sharp$ , D $\flat$ , E $\flat$ , F $\flat$ , G $\flat$ , G $\sharp$ , A $\sharp$ , B $\flat$ , covering the entire range of the keyboard. The virile first theme rapidly becomes declamatory.

A brief episode built on an unique handling of a chord of the ninth on the sixth degree of the scale follows. Then ensues a jocund alternation of major and minor modes similar to that seen in the first movement (pages 31, staves 3-4). This leads through some very difficult and exacting, but thoroughly pianistic, passage work to the re-statement of the first theme. This passage work is an expansion of that found in the slow movement.

An episode in B minor reveals the first theme treated in a still different

manner, this time very forcefully in the bass, while the right hand is busy leaping over the upper registers of the keyboard. This leads directly into a *Largamente* section in E flat minor, one of the most chromatically dissonant passages in all Preyer (page 37, staves 1-2).

The development section is concerned with the working-out of the thematic material offered by the first and second subjects. A dissection of its harmonies, a very profitable effort, is left to interested persons. The first theme reappears for the last time in the bass, made very excitingly consummate by the use of full chords on the accents. Again the right hand leaps over the upper keyboard. This eventually leads to a *Largamente* coda where the falling minor third intervals keep emphasizing "K. U." This is a derivative of the University of Kansas cheer, "Rock Chalk, Jay Hawk, K. U.," only the "K. U." section being alluded to. By exalting these two significant letters in permanent form in his greatest creative effort, the Kansas musician, Carl A. Preyer, placed the University and its alumni in his indebtedness.

Following immediately upon the falling minor third intervals is a brief reference to the opening measures of the University of Kansas alma mater song, "Crimson and the Blue" (page 42, last measure, and page 43, first three measures). The composer once explained his employment of an allusion to this song. "I've had that melody running through my head for years and the only way to get rid of it was to put it down in music." The measures may be found on the cover design of this book.

A difficult passage in contrary major thirds leads to a return of the original synthetic scale. A quite dissonant chord built on Eb, F#, A $\sharp$ , Db—defying formal analysis—precedes the closing chord, where again is seen Preyer's singular use of chords of the added sixth.

Truly a distinctive work!

\* \* \*

To examine closely one of Preyer's scores is a fascinating experience. Few musicians of our time put their pieces together with greater security, either in the skeletal framework, in the modelling of the melodic phrases, or in the careful shaping of the whole. Preyer knew what he was doing, but that was the least of it; the exciting thing is to note how this technical adroitness was put at the service of a wonderfully spontaneous musical gift. He possessed both a poetic and a critical mind, and one is certain that his compositions were put together carefully, after mature reflection.

There are a few facts about his composing technique which should be recorded. Various musical themes would develop in his mind and more or less plague him until he had put them down on paper. He told the present writer that he never did deliberately set out to compose a work in some certain form or try to produce an idea which had not already been present in his mind. This explains the apparent spontaneity of his music, the melodic charm which is ever present.

Preyer's personality was so strong that he early found his way to the expression of an idiom which differed so greatly from that of other American composers, that his piano music has a character all its own.

Carl A. Preyer was one of the most original piano composers of America, showing complete comprehension of idiomatic writing for the piano. The professional or amateur musician who studies Preyer's piano works, and who discerns in them the loving care and thoughtful understanding with which they were designed, can hardly fail to perceive that the instrument was the object of his unvarying devotion, the solace of his quiet hours, and a never-failing source of inspiration to him. In return for all the pleasure it brought him, he lavished on it his finest thought and creative endowment.

Preyer's music is rich in melody, vivid in rhythm, and noble in harmony. May it long engage the mind and content the soul.



XI. PREYER IN LATER LIFE (ABOUT 1940)

## Postlude

Sweet is the remembrance of this kindly man of rare gifts. His memory falls tenderly, yet sadly, on the spirit of those who were privileged to know him. To them the time will never come when the sense of loss of Preyer, the man, will grow less or when the recollection of his benign and gracious presence, wise with many years and tender through much experience, will have faded away. Preyer, the teacher, lives in the esteem of the University of Kansas and its alumni; and Preyer, the composer, will be part of the enduring American musical tradition.

Although we cannot touch his hand we still can feel his presence. His spirit is in our midst even as we think anew of his virtues. It is the present writer's hope that this spirit has been captured to some extent in these pages.





# Compositions of Carl A. Preyer

The following list is as complete as it is possible to make it since many works existing only in manuscript have been lost. Early publication of some of the manuscript works (especially those marked by a dagger) is anticipated as the work of the Preyer Memorial Committee continues. Many of the early published works are now out of print, but a careful search through various music houses will secure copies for those interested. The compositions preceded by an asterisk may be obtained at cost on photostatic films from the University of Kansas Photographic Bureau.

## Published Piano Works with Opus Numbers

- Op. 8, Danse Fantastique.* Kunkel Bros. Copyright 1888.
- Op. 9, La Violante (Mazurka Melodieuse)* Wm. Rohlfing & Co. Copyright 1888.
- Op. 12, No. 1, Wiegenlied.* The John Church Co. Copyright 1887.
- Op. 14, Festal Polonaise.* Kunkel Bros. Copyright 1887.
- Op. 25, Danse Hongroise,* Kunkel Bros. Copyright 1888.
- Op. 26, Six Octave Studies (P1020)* Presser. Copyright 1890.
- Op. 28, Nocturne (in C major)* Carl Hoffmann. Copyright 1894.
- Op. 30, Twenty Progressive Octave Studies for the Piano. Books I & II.* Ditson. Copyright 1902.
- \**Op. 31, Pensees Melodiques ("Windmill Suite")* Olin Bell. Copyright 1895.
- Op. 32, Variations on an Original Theme in A Minor.* Breitkopf und Härtel. Copyright 1897.
- \**Op. 33, Sonata No. 1, in C sharp minor.* Breitkopf und Härtel. Copyright 1899.
- Op. 35, Twenty Melodious Pieces in Forms of Etudes. Books I & II.* G. Schirmer. Copyright 1900.
- Op. 36, No. 1, Dialogue Without Words.* Ditson. Copyright 1900.
- Op. 36, No. 2, Toccata in A.* Ditson. Copyright 1900.
- Op. 38, Six Easy Pieces for the Piano:*
  - No. 1 Folk Song*
  - No. 2 Gavotte*
  - No. 3 March*
  - No. 4 Slumber Song*
  - No. 5 Tarantelle*
  - No. 6 Valse Lente*
 Published separately by Ditson. Copyright 1901.
- Op. 39, 8 Etudes from Clementi's Gradus ad Parnassum, arranged as a preparatory school for modern piano works.* Breitkopf und Härtel. Copyright 1902.
- Op. 40, No. 1, Norwegian Dance.* G. Schirmer. Copyright 1901.
- Op. 40, No. 2, Canzonetta.* G. Schirmer. Copyright 1901.
- Op. 40, No. 3, Serenade Espagnole.* G. Schirmer. Copyright 1901.
- Op. 43, Twelve Wrist Studies in the Form of Short Pieces for the Piano.* Ditson Ed. No. 94. Copyright 1905.
- Op. 44, Studies for the Development of Rhythm and Expression.* Ditson Ed. 110, 111. Books I & II. Copyright 1906.
- Op. 45, 12 Etudes for the Development of the Left Hand.* Edition Schmidt No. 120. Copyright 1907.
- \**Op. 48, Scherzo in B flat minor.* Breitkopf und Härtel. Copyright 1907.
- Op. 49, Concertstück, for pianoforte with accompaniment of a second piano.* Breitkopf und Härtel. Copyright 1908. (Second piano part orchestrated by Sir Carl Busch and published by Breitkopf und Härtel.)
- Op. 50, The Brook-Nymphs (Humoreske).* White-Smith Publishing Co. Copyright 1917. (Scherzo movement of an unpublished Sonata in F minor, Op. 50.)
- Op. 52, Technical Exercises in a Musical Setting.* Presser. Copyright 1912.
- Op. 53, Ten Easy Wrist Studies in the Form of Lyric Pieces. (The Chatterbox, Skating, A Rainy Day, Autumn Song, Scherzino, Music Box, Morning Serenade, Bugaboo, The Chase, Indian Dance).* Ditson. Copyright 1915.
- Op. 55, No. 1, Consolation.* Musicians' Publishing Co. Copyright 1915.
- Op. 55, No. 2, The Ballet Dancer.* Musicians' Publishing Co. Copyright 1915.

### Published Piano Works without Opus Numbers

*Two Miniatures: Elves, Entreaty*. Published separately by G. Schirmer. Copyright 1925.

*Six Compositions for the Piano:*

*Mazurka Miniature* (P23099)

*Hindoo Dance* (P23100)

*Strolling Along* (P23101)

*Song of the Cello* (P23102)

*Scherzino* (P23103)

*Dusk* (P23104)

Published separately by Presser. Copyright 1926.

*Five Easy Staccato Studies*. Schirmer's Scholastic Series, Vol. 197. (*Scherzetto, Valse Petite, Impromptu, Gavotte, Staccato Caprice*) G. Schirmer. Copyright 1927.

*Two Piano Compositions:*

*Improvisation*

*Concert Etude* (also known as *Prelude in C*)

Published separately by Edw. Schuberth & Co., Inc. Copyright 1938.

*Etude in F sharp minor*. Edw. Schuberth & Co., Inc. Copyright 1946.

*Hudson River Sketches:*

*Palisades*. Edw. Schuberth & Co., Inc. Copyright 1946.

*Spuyten Duyvil Toccata*. Edw. Schuberth & Co., Inc. Copyright 1948.

*Sonata No. IV in E flat major*. Carl Fischer, Inc. Copyright 1949.

I. *Allegro vivace*

II. *Lento*

III. *Allegro Scherzoso*

IV. "K. U." *Molto Vivace*

*Theme and Variations* (middle movement of *Sonatina*). Edw. Schuberth & Co., Inc. Copyright 1949.

### Unpublished Piano Works with Opus Numbers

Op. 16, *Six Short Sketches in Form of Grace Notes*

Op. 29, *Gavotte Antique*

\*Op. 34, No. 1, *Mazurka, C major*

\*Op. 34, No. 2, *Serenade Mignonne*

\*Op. 42, No. 1, *Nocturne in B flat*

Op. 43, No. 2, *Capriccietto*

Op. 46, No. 1, *Prelude in C* (not the same as *Concert Etude* published by Edw. Schuberth & Co., Inc.)

\*Op. 46, No. 2, *Chant du Barde* (for left hand alone)

Op. 46, No. 3, *Scherzino* (for left hand alone)

\*Op. 46, No. 4, *Valse* (for left hand alone)

\*Op. 47, *Fairy Tale Suite*

Op. 49, No. 2, *Impromptu, in G minor*

Op. 49, No. 4, *Capriccio*

\*Op. 50, *Sonata in F minor* (1909)

I. *Allegro appassionata*

II. *Romance*

III. *Humoreske* (Published as *The Brook-Nymphs*)

IV. *Grave-Presto con fuoco*

\*Op. 51, No. 1, *A Southern Lullaby*

\*Op. 51, No. 2, *Danse Caprice*

Op. 52, *Prelude in G minor* (also known as *Staccato Caprice*)

\*Op. 54, No. 1, *Prelude*

\*Op. 54, No. 2, *Pastorale*

Op. 54, No. 5, *Spring Song*

\*Op. 54, No. 6, *Tarantella, a minor*

## Unpublished Piano Works without Opus Numbers

(Dates where given indicate approximate year of composition)

- Aubade*  
\* *Au Matin (At Sunrise)* (1917)  
\* *Ballade in A flat* (1938)  
\* *The Brooklet*  
*Chanson du rouet*  
\* *Chanson Lyrique*  
*Chant du Voyageur*  
*Concert Mazurka in D flat* (1909)  
*Concert Minuet*  
\* *Concert Waltz in A flat* (1917)  
*Danse Viennoise*  
*Fugue in B flat* (four-voices)  
\* *Humoreske in D*  
*Humoreske in Seconds and Fifths* (also known as *Oriental Dance*) (1925)  
*Impromptu in F major*  
*In Switzerland*  
*Legend*  
\* *Legend of an Old Castle (Suite)* (1945)  
\* *Mazurka in A minor* (1925)  
\* *Mazurka in C sharp minor* (1946)  
*Melodie Mignonne*  
*Minuet Moderne* (1909)  
*Nine Poetic Studies:* (1938)  
*Prelude*  
*Tempo di Valse*  
*Song of the Brook*  
*Scherzino*  
*Cradle Song*  
*Elfin Dance*  
*Hunting Song*  
*Barcarole*  
*March*  
*Nocturne in B minor*  
† *Poetic Studies for the Piano:*  
*Prelude*  
*Lost*  
*Hop Along*  
*Over the Hills*  
*Sunday Morning*  
*Gossip*  
*Millstream*  
*Meandering*  
*Preludes* (very early, presumably around 1900)  
*No. 3, The Chatterbox*  
*No. 4, Valse Lente*  
*No. 9, In German Style*  
*No. 10, Andantino*  
*No. 11, Swingsong*  
*No. 12, Scherzino*  
*No. 15, Air de Ballet*  
*No. 16, Legend*  
*No. 17, In Scotch Style*  
*No. 20, Allegro appassionata*  
*No. 22, Lament*  
*No. 23, Elusion*  
*No. 24, Polish Dance*

*Preludes (1936)*

*G major*

*G minor*

*C sharp minor*

*D major*

*F sharp minor*

*C minor*

*C major (Published as the Concert Etude)*

*A minor*

*A major*

*E major*

*Prelude in E flat, No. 2*

*Romance (in B flat)*

*Scherzo in C minor (1933)*

\* *Serenade Rocco*

\*† *Seven Short Pieces for the Piano (1945)*

*Good Morning, My Fair Lady*

*Shadows*

*Landscape*

*Bagpipe*

*Tender Talk*

*Flight*

*Sonata in F major (??)*

I. ??

II. *Andante con variazione*

III. *Rondo*

\* *Sonatina (1944) (middle movement published as Theme and Variations)*

*Slumbersong*

*Tarantella in G major*

\* *Tarantella in G minor*

*Technical Exercises for the Equal Development of Both Hands*

\* *Theme with Variations and Fugue (in F major) (1942)*

*Three Easy Pieces for the Piano:*

*Oriental Dance*

*Minuet (Papa Hadyn)*

*Tarantella*

*Three Miniatures (1932)*

*Prelude*

*Cradle Song (same as Cradle Song in Nine Poetic Studies)*

*Oriente*

*Under Southern Skies*

\* *Valse Facile*

\* *Valse Humoreske*

\* *Valse Impromptu (1946)*

*Valse Lyrique*

***Published and Unpublished Transcriptions for Piano Solo***

*Deer Dance* (Tr. of C. S. Skilton's *Orchestral Score*) (P1365) Carl Fischer.  
Copyright 1924.

\* *Concert Transcription of Johann Strauss' Thousand and One Nights Walz*  
(1930)

\* *Concert Transcription of Johann Strauss' Morning Journals Walz*

*Transcription of Weber's Perpetual Motion*

*Transcription of Autumn Even Song (Autumn Revery) (original song)*

*Transcription of The Willow Tree (original song)*

*War Dance* (Tr. of C. S. Skilton's *Orchestra Score*) (P969) Carl Fischer.  
Copyright 1921.

### **Unpublished Works for Violin and Piano**

*Introduction and Rondo in F major*

\**Op. 51, Sonata in F major*

*Sonata in A major* (1932)

*Sonata in G major* (1937?)

### **Published and Unpublished Works for Two Pianos**

\**Fairy Legend Suite* (1933) (original score for solo piano) (Some parts were later orchestrated by Karl Kuersteiner)

*Second piano part to Mendelssohn's Spring Song*

*Thema mit Variationen* (F major)

\**Transcription of Johann Strauss' One Thousand and One Nights Waltz*. Edward B. Marks Music Corporation. Copyright 1949.

\**Transcription of Johann Strauss' Morning Journals Waltz Variations and Fugue*

### **Published and Unpublished Vocal Solos**

*Op. 22, Why I Love Her So* (Words by Mrs. Kidder) Ditson. Copyright 1888.

*Op. 24, Serenade (A Sevillian Love Song)* (Words by Hamilton Aide) Kunkel. Copyright 1888.

\**Op. 37, No. 1, Thou Seemest to Me a Flower* (Words by Heine)

*Op. 37, No. 1, Childhood* (Words by "Ironquill") Ditson. Copyright 1901.

*Op. 37, No. 2, Elusion* (Words by "Ironquill") Ditson. Copyright 1901.

*Op. 37, No. 2, Hush-a-by, Little One Sleep* (Words by Cy. Warman)

*Op. 37, No. 3, The Miller's Daughter* (Words by Alfred Tennyson)

*Op. 41, No. 1, I Love My Love* (Words by Charles Mackay) Ditson. Copyright 1902.

*Op. 41, No. 3, A Sea-Song* (Words by Susan Hartley)

*Op. 41, No. 7, O My Love's Like a Red, Red Rose* (Words by Robert Burns) Ditson. Copyright 1902.

*Op. 42, No. 1, A Spanish Song* (Tr. by Prof. W. H. Carruth) Ditson. Copyright 1903.

*Op. 42, No. 2, The Heart* (Tr. by Prof. W. H. Carruth)

*Op. 42, No. 2, A Snow Song* (Words by Clinton Scollard) Ditson. Copyright 1903.

*Op. 44, No. 1, Song* (Words by Thomas Lowell Beddoes)

*Op. 44, No. 3, Roundel* (Words by Walter Winsor)

*Autumn Even Song* (1934) (Words by George Meredith)

*Day Is Dying in the West* (Words by Mary A. Lathbury) Ditson. Copyright 1927.

*Hunting Song* (Words by Sir Walter Scott)

†*I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes* (121st Psalm) (1944) Edw. Schuberth & Co., Inc. Copyright 1950.

†*The Lord Is My Shepherd* (1944) Edw. Schuberth & Co., Inc. Copyright 1950. *The Lord's Prayer*. Presser. Copyright 1926.

*The Sky* (Words by H. R. Stoddard)

†*The Water-Lily Lady* (1934) (Words by Sara Van Alstyne Allen)

†*The Willow Tree* (Words by Margaret Anderson)

*The Wind* (Words by Esther Clark Hill)

### **Unpublished Choral Work without Opus Number**

†*Festival Te Deum Laudamus*

### **Unpublished Ensemble Works without Opus Numbers**

*Quintet in F*

*Quintet in E minor* (1942) (only first three movements completed)

*Trio in B flat* (1941)



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